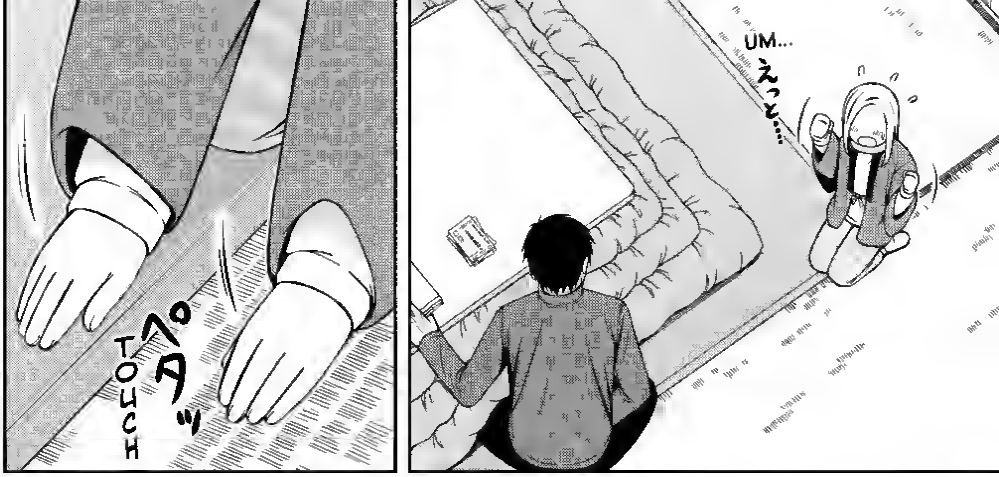
CHAPTER 54

A NEW YEAR

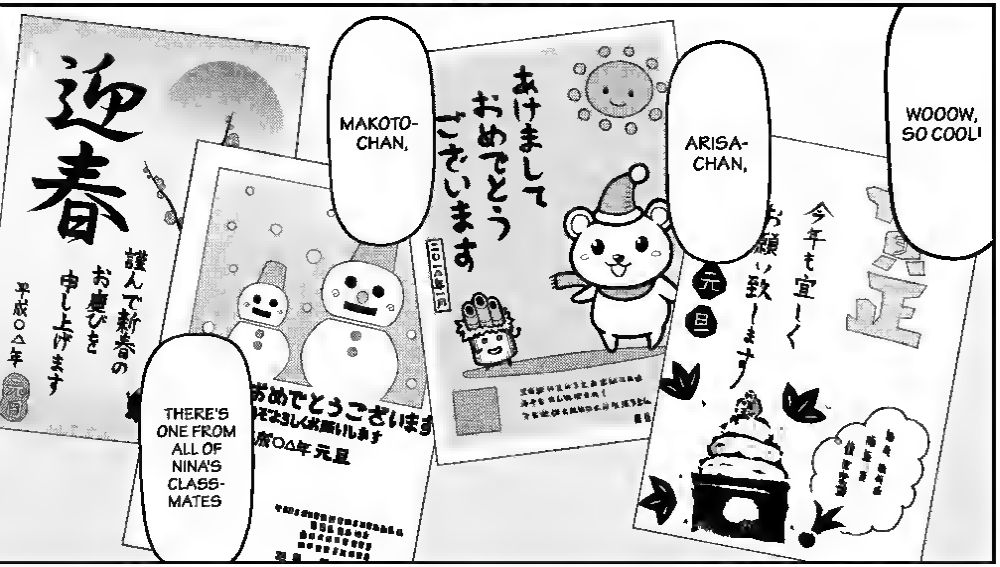
THE NEW YEAR HAS BEGUN,
BUT NINA IS STILL SLEEPY...
GOOD MORNING, NINA
MORNING
AREN'T YOU FORGETTING SOMETHING?
...
OH, RIGHT
?

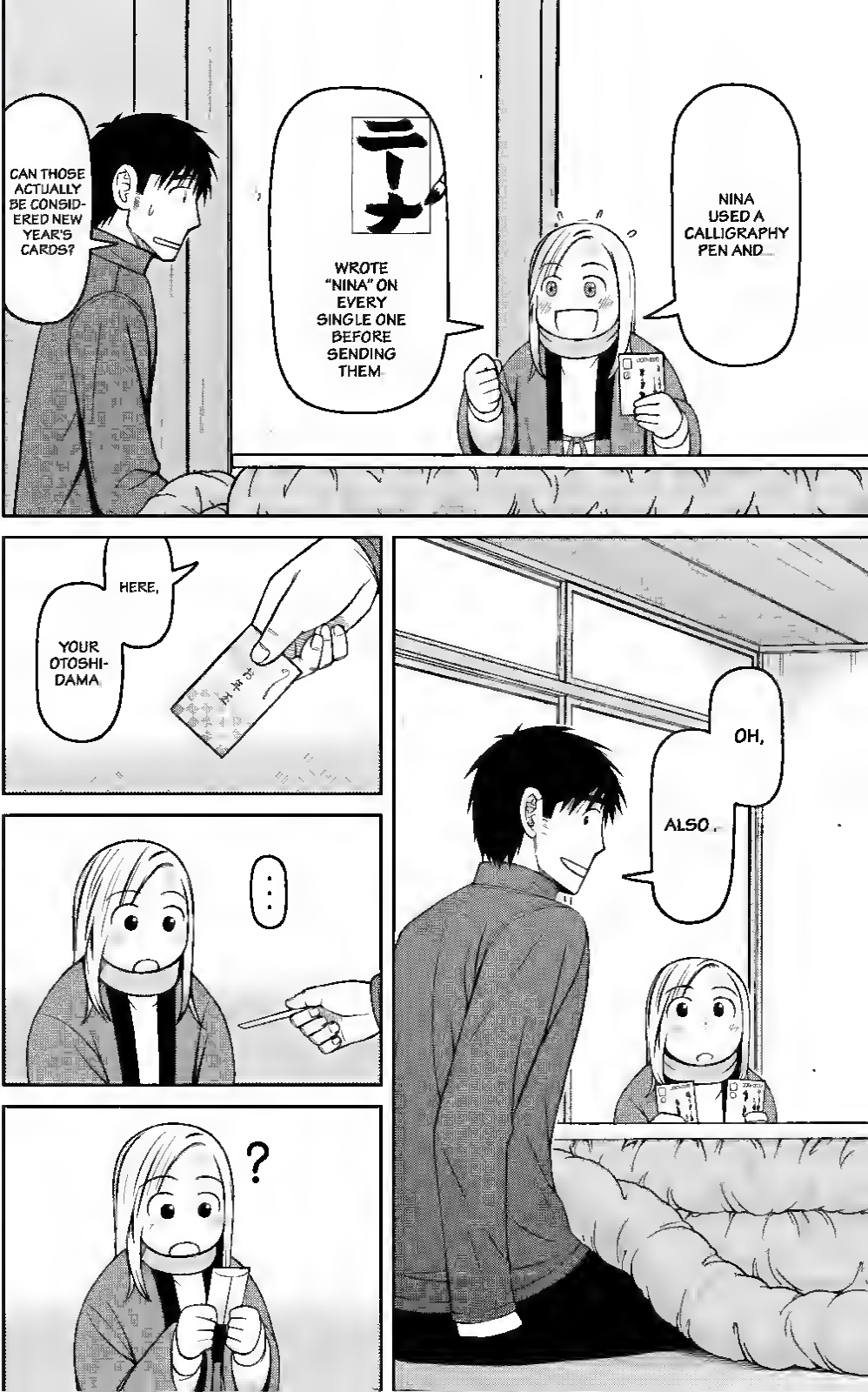

TOUCH
UM...
えっと…

HAPPY NEW YEAR.
A HAPPY NEW YEAR.
NINA WISHES YOU..

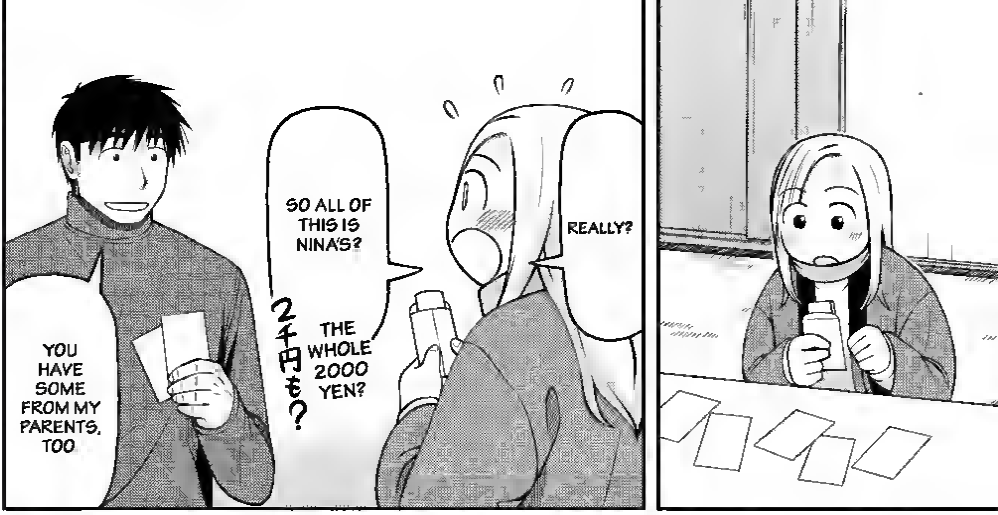
BEING THAT FORMAL AT HOME
STILL FEELS WEIRD, THOUGH
HEH.
THAT WAS PERF-ECT
DID NINA DO IT RIGHT?

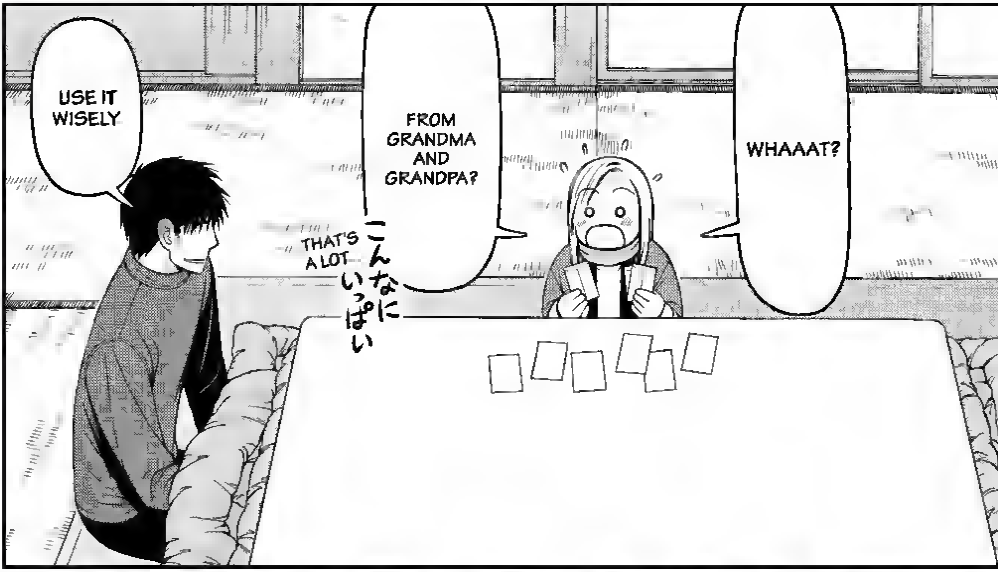
CARDS: HAPPY NEW YEAR



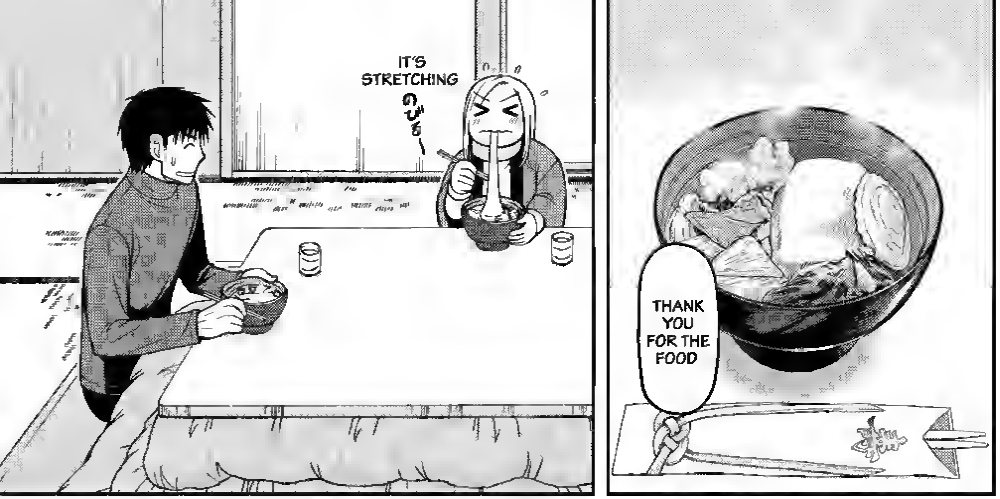

NINA USED A CALLIGRAPHY PEN AND...
ニーナ
WROTE "NINA" ON EVERY SINGLE ONE BEFORE SENDING THEM
CAN THOSE ACTUALLY BE CONSIDERED NEW YEAR'S CARDS?
OH, ALSO...
HERE, YOUR OTOSHI-DAMA
...
?

OPEN THE ENVELOPE
HUH?
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT AN OTOSHI-DAMA IS?
WHAT'S AN OTOSHI-DAMA?
OH, THERE'S MONEY IN HERE.
?
1000
AN ALLOWANCE THAT YOU ONLY GET ON NEW YEAR'S.
YEP, AN OTOSHI-DAMA IS LIKE...

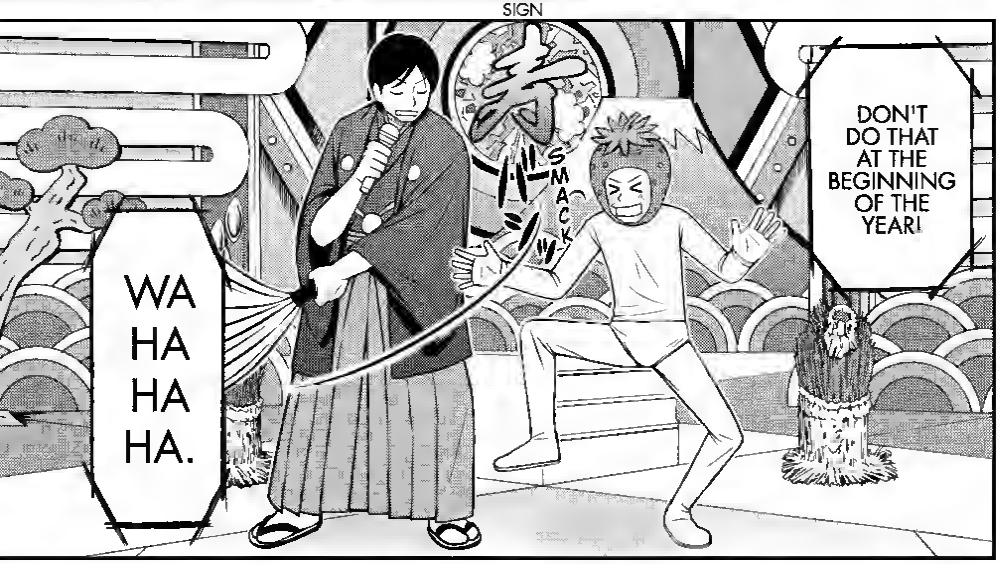

YOU HAVE SOME FROM MY PARENTS, TOO
SO ALL OF THIS IS NINA'S?
2千円も?
THE WHOLE 2000 YEN?
REALLY?

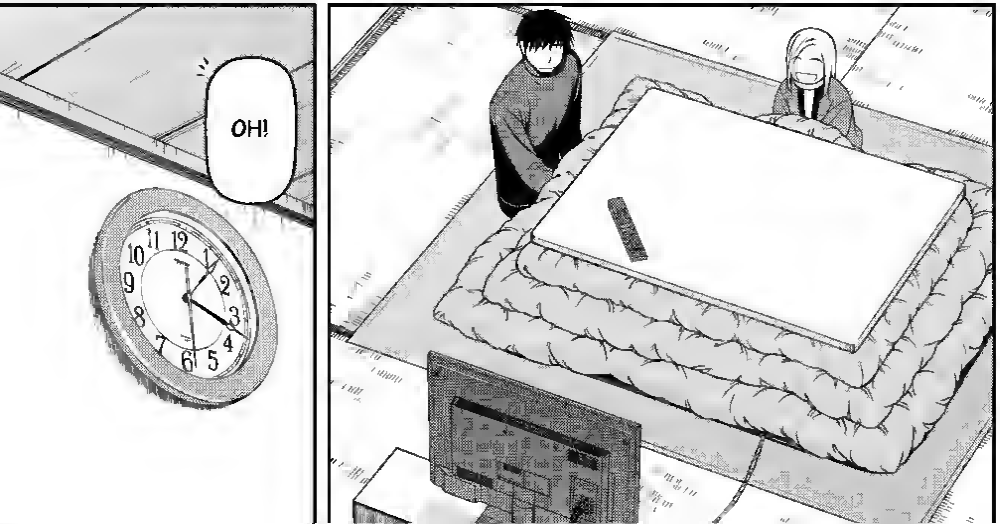

USE IT WISELY
FROM GRANDMA AND GRANDPA?
こんなにいっぱい
THAT'S A LOT
WHAAAT?

お正月ってすごいっ
NEW YEAR'S IS AMAZING!

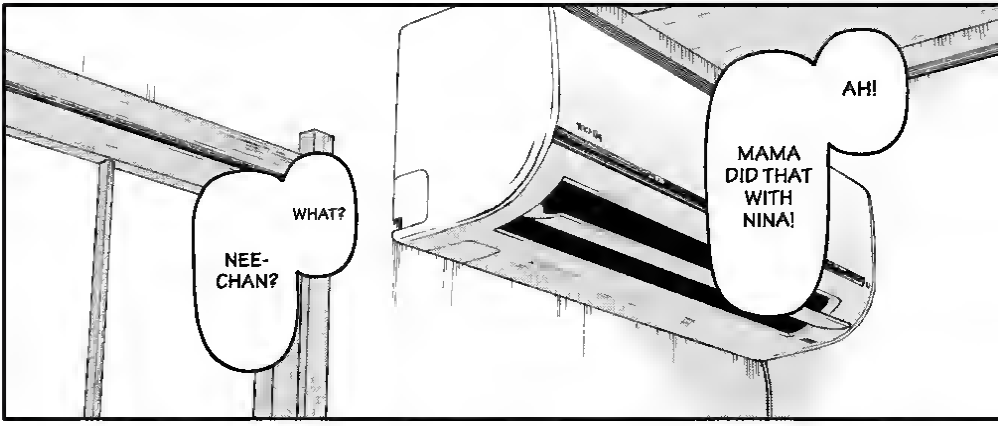

IT'S STRETCHING
THANK YOU FOR THE FOOD

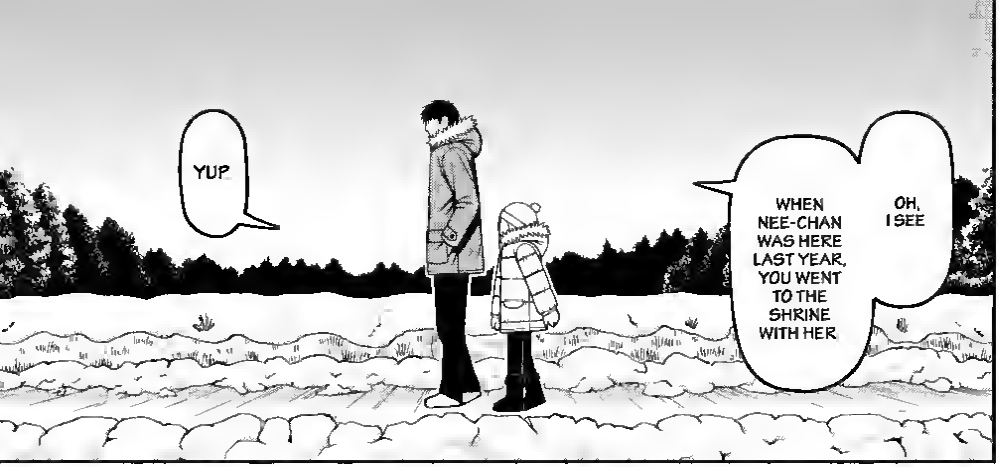
SIGN


SMACK
DON'T DO THAT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR!
WA HA HA HA.


OH!

NINA,
LET'S GO DO HATSU-MÔDE
HATSU-MÔDE?


AH!
MAMA DID THAT WITH NINA!
WHAT?
NEE-CHAN?

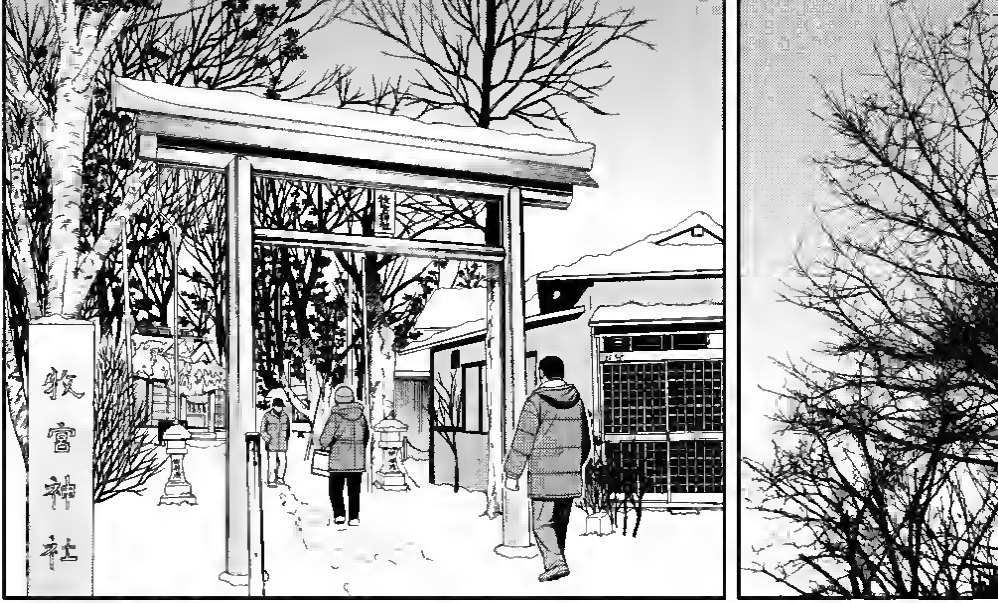

YUP
WHEN NEE-CHAN WAS HERE LAST YEAR, YOU WENT TO THE SHRINE WITH HER
OH, I SEE

YEAH, SOMETHING LIKE THAT

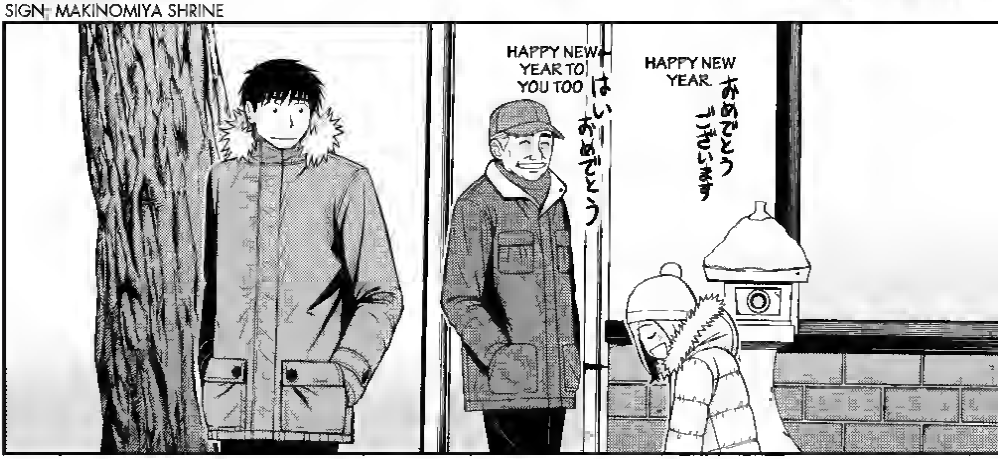
IT'S THE THING YOU DO TO SAY HI TO THE GODS, RIGHT?

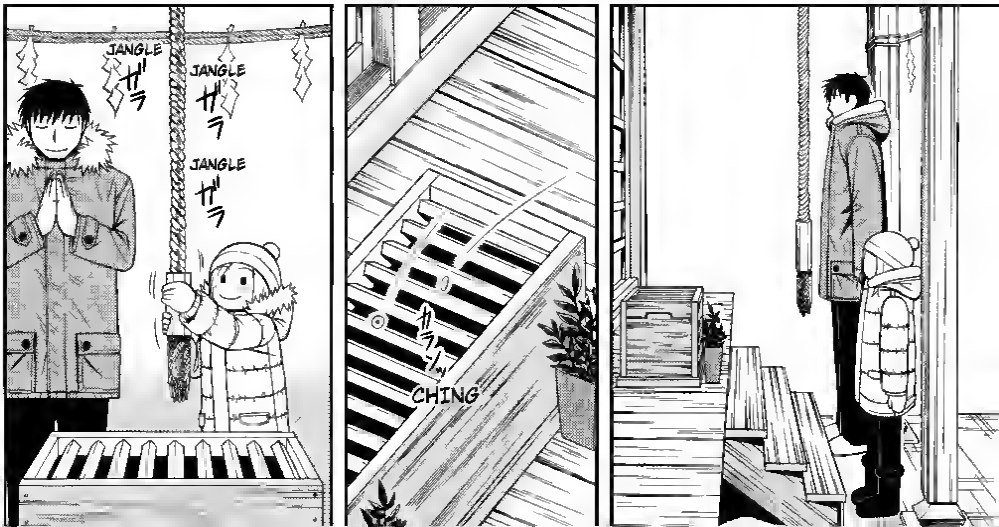
HAPPY NEW YEAR
HAPPY NEW YEAR.
DO YOU KNOW THEM?
NOT AT ALL.
HM?
HEY, SHUTARO

WELL, NEW YEAR'S IS USUALLY LIKE THIS
YOU SAY HI TO PEOPLE TO THAT YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW
BUT YOU JUST EXCHANGED GREETINGS WITH THEM
HUH?
BUT I GUESS THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN IN TOKYO...
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE WE'RE IN THE COUNTRY
HUH...
WELL, THE NEXT TIME NINA SEES SOME-ONE...
SHE'LL SAY A GREETING
TO THEM
OKAY, BUT DON'T GO TOO OVER-BOARD



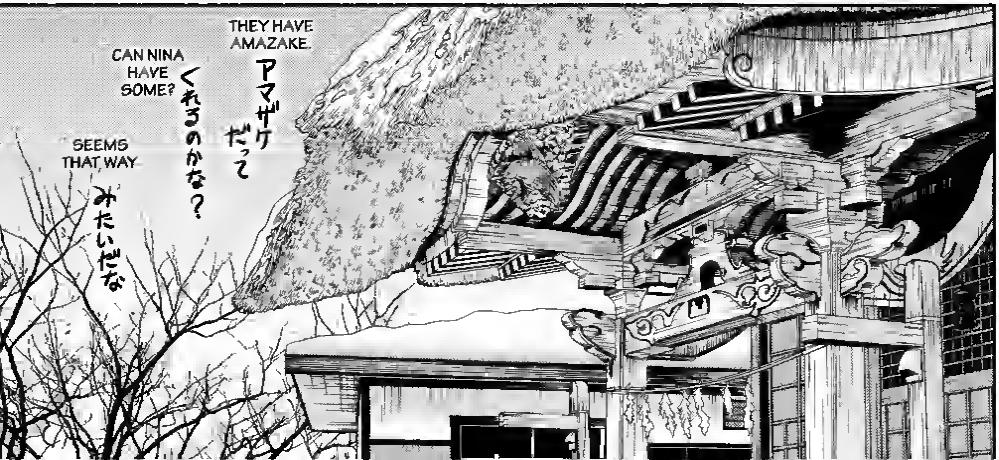
SIGN: MAKINOMIYA SHRINE



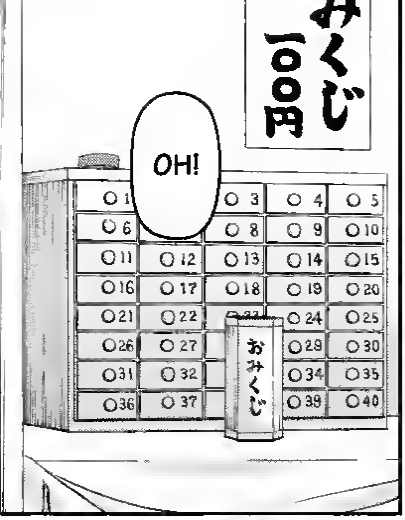


HAVE SOME SWEET SAKE
甘酒どうぞ

何をおねがいしたんだ？
WHAT DID YOU WISH FOR?
IT'S A SECRET
ナイショ

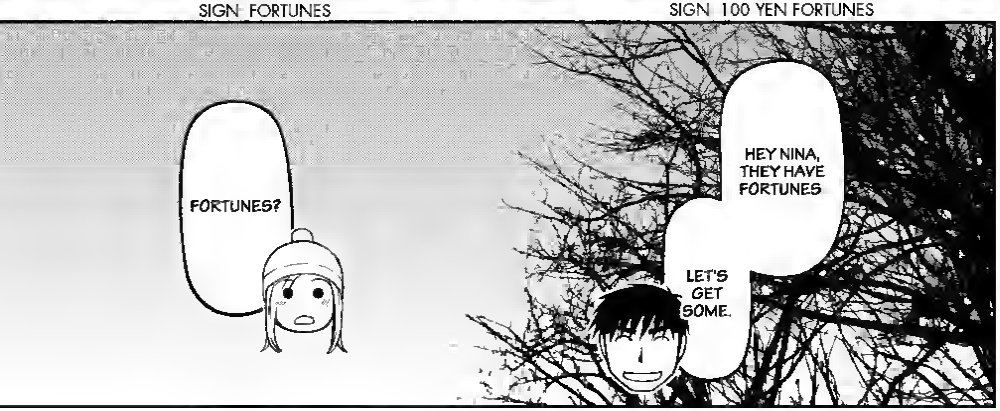

THEY HAVE AMAZAKE.
アマザケだって
CAN NINA HAVE SOME?
くれるのかな？
SEEMS THAT WAY
みたいだな

SIP
ズー
BLOW
ふー
BLOW
MAY I HAVE SOME?
ください
THIS IS GOOD, SHUTARO.
YEAH, IT WARMS YOU RIGHT UP.
はー
SIGH



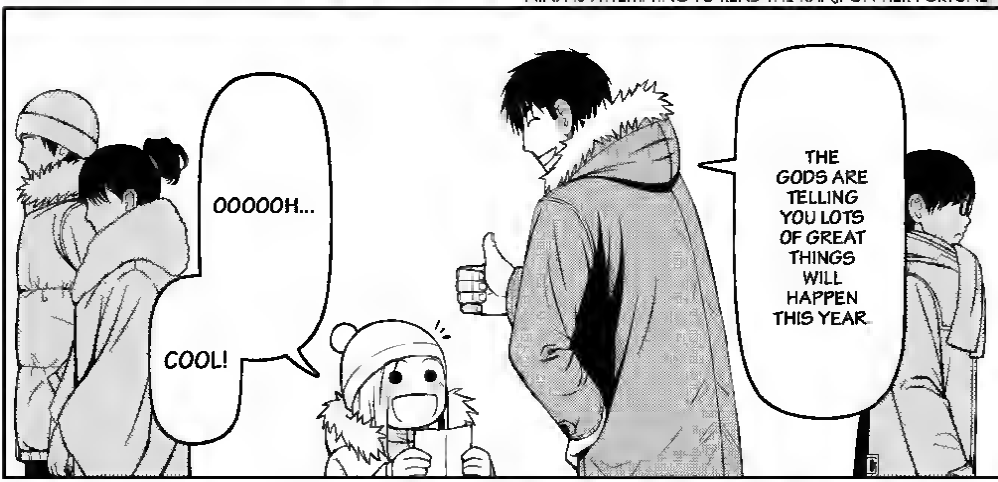
SIGN: FORTUNES

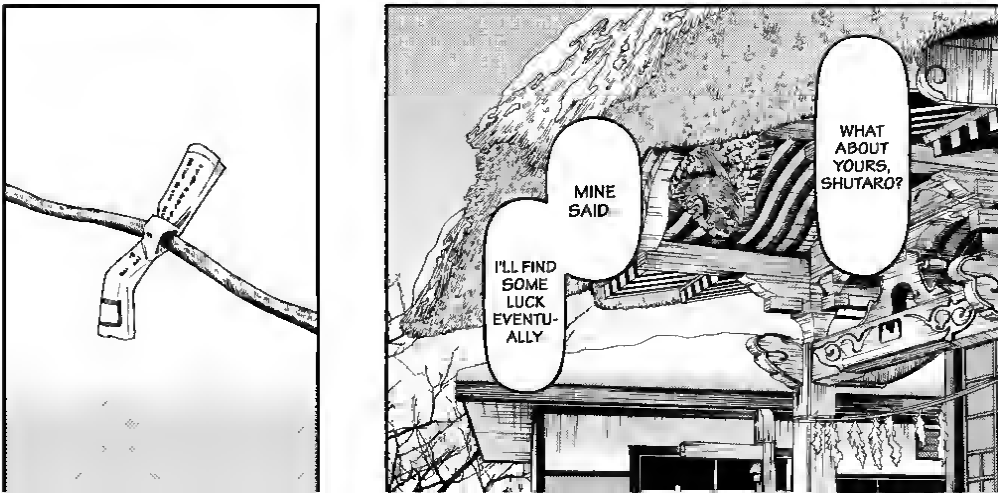
SIGN: 100 YEN FORTUNES



SIGN: EXCELLENT LUCK

* NINA IS ATTEMPTING TO READ THE KANJI ON HER FORTUNE.



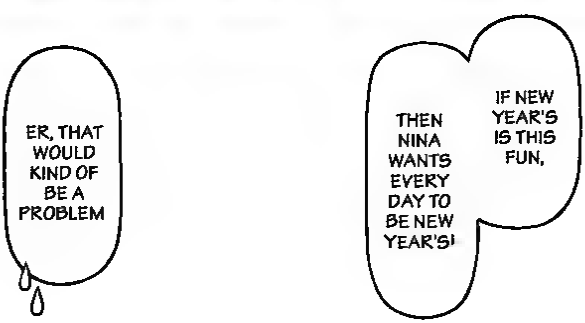


THERE ARE SO MANY FORTUNES TIED TO THE TREE!
YEP, WHEN YOU GET A FORTUNE THAT IS 50-50
IT'S GOOD TO TIE IT TO THE TREE AT THE SHRINE.

OAIKICHI IS THE BEST YOU CAN GET,
SO YOU WANT TO KEEP IT ON YOU.

SO, NINA OOESN'T HAVE TO TIE HERS?

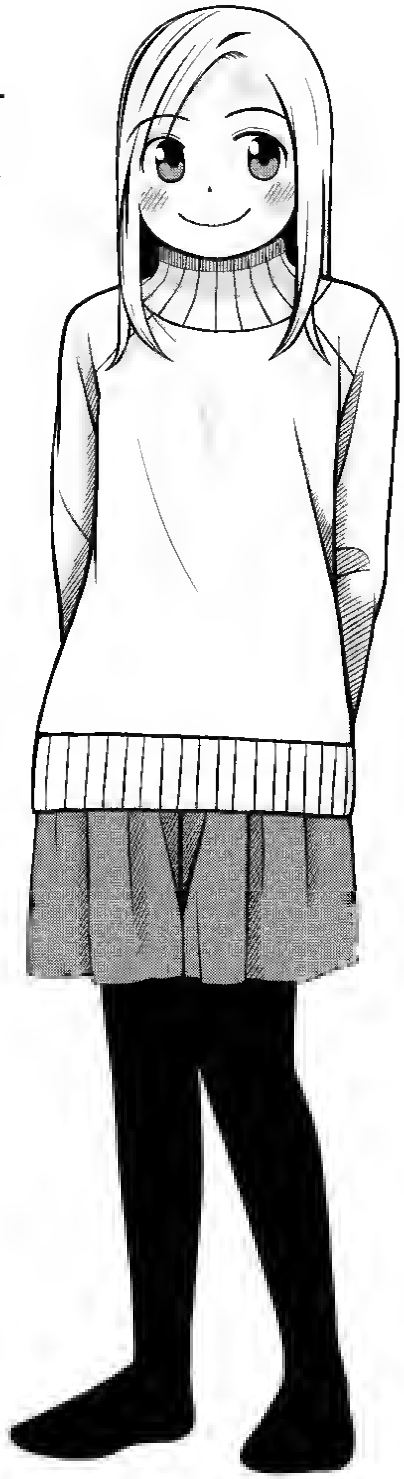
ON TOP OF NINA?
何それ？
WHAT?
NOT ON TOP OF YOU, ON YOU.



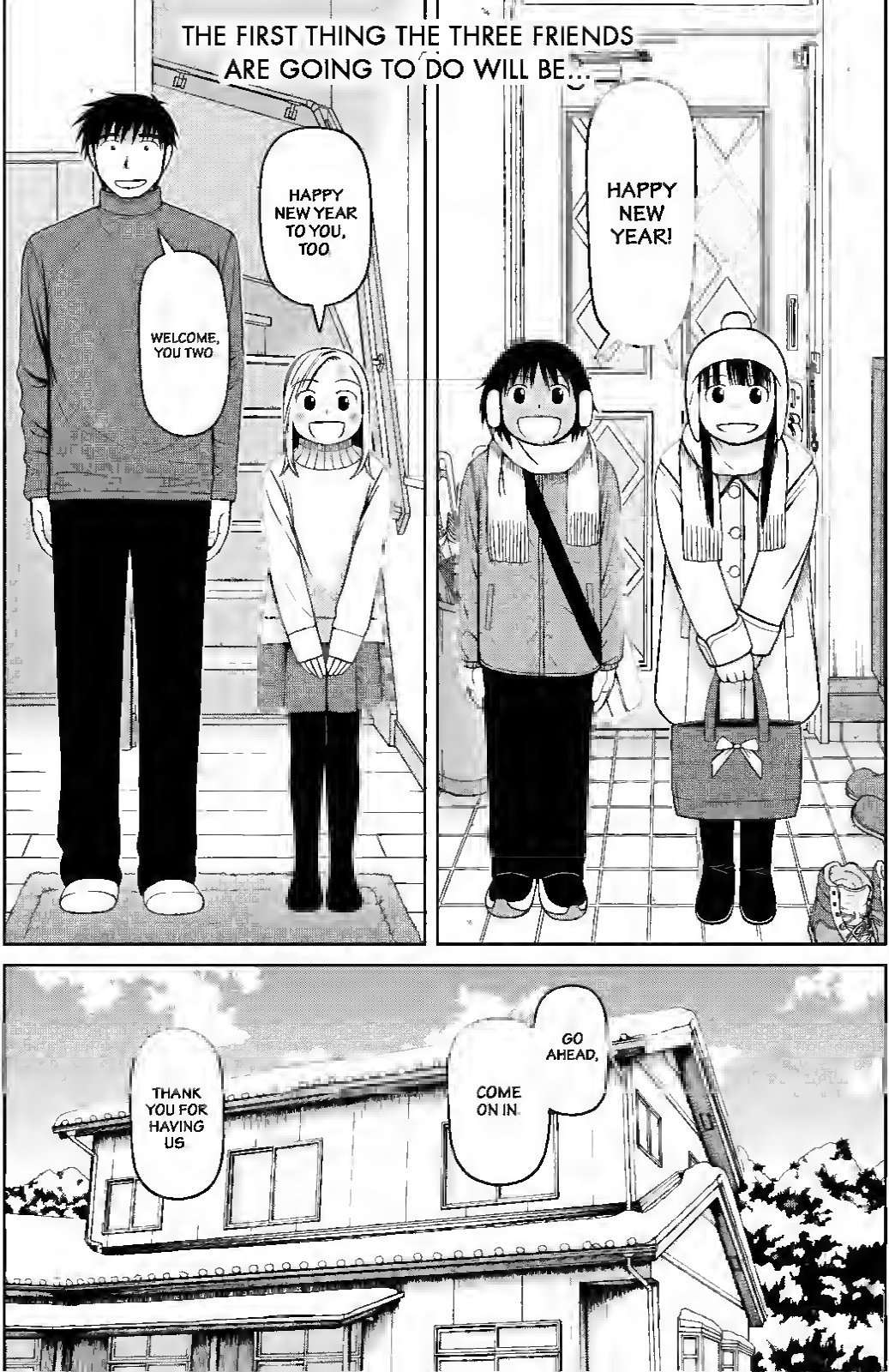
LET'S CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE JAPANESE NEW YEAR!

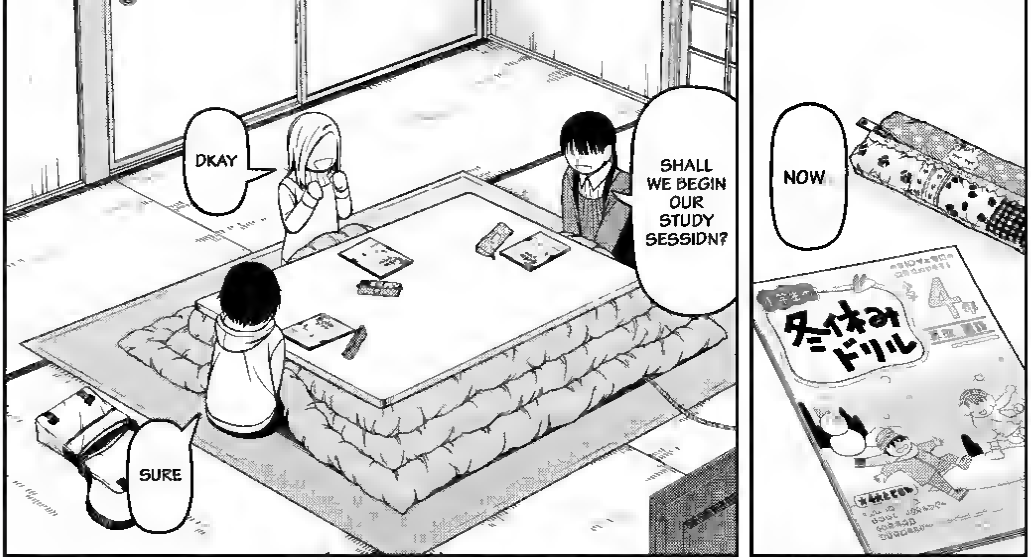
CHAPTER 55

LET'S DO IT TOGETHER

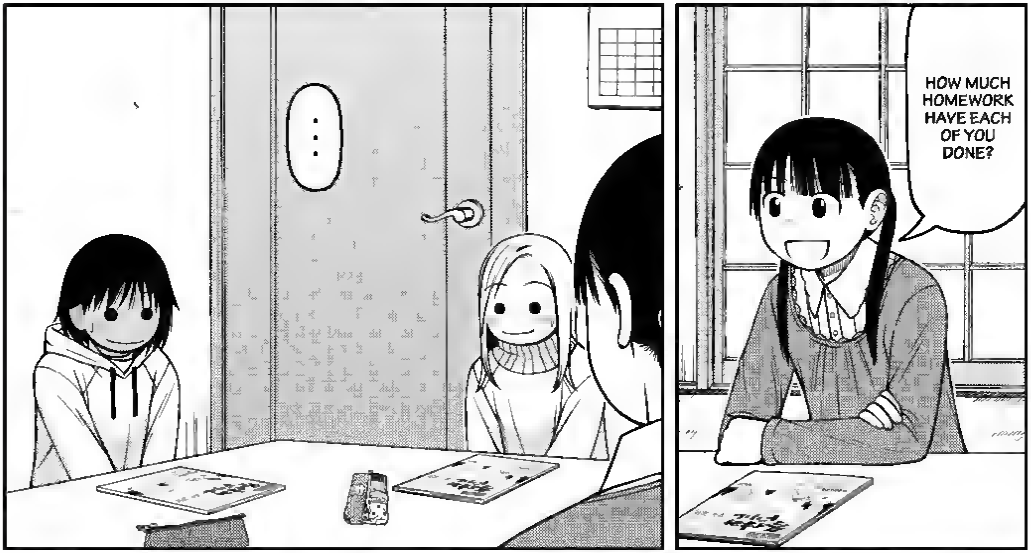


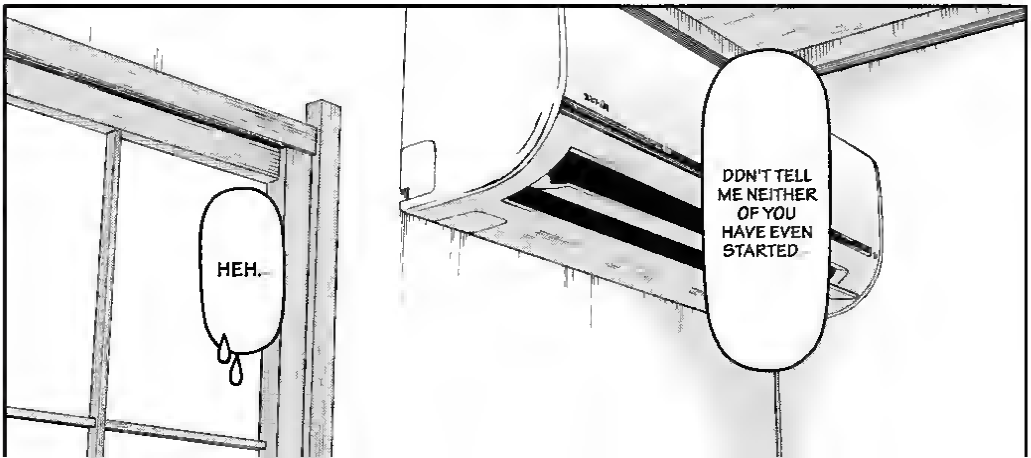
SOMETIMES WINTER VACATION ISN'T ALL FUN AND GAMES...


THE FIRST THING THE THREE FRIENDS ARE GOING TO DO WILL BE...
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
WELCOME, YOU TWO
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU, TOO
GO AHEAD, COME ON IN.
THANK YOU FOR HAVING US



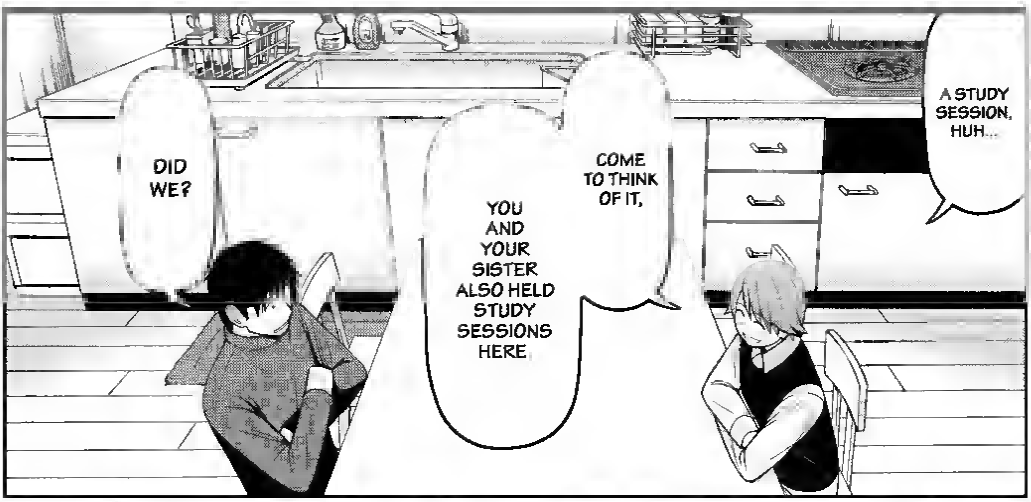
BOOK! WINTER BREAK DRILLS





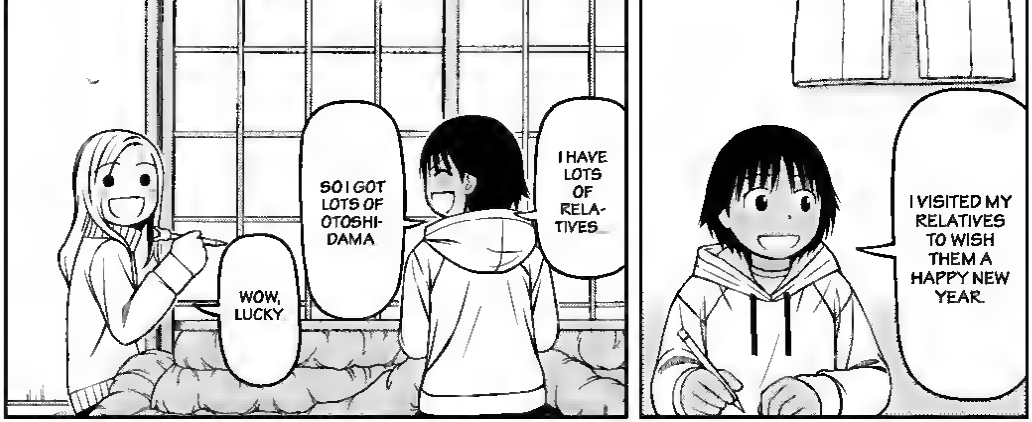
NO.
PLEASE, KOHINATA...
LET ME COPY YOUR HOME-WORK.
UM, REALLY?
IF YOU ACTUALLY DID IT YOURSELF, YOU COULD FINISH ALL OF IT TODAY
AWW
NOT EVEN A LITTLE BIT?
IF I WERE TO LET YOU DO THAT, THIS STUDY SESSION WOULD BECOME A COPYING SESSION.
YOU TOO, SHIMA-ZAKI-SAN.
ANO IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, I'LL BE HAPPY TO HELP YOU OUT.
ALL RIGHT

NINA-CHAN'S FRIENDS SEEM NICE.
HM...
YEAH, THEY'RE PRETTY MATURE FOR 4TH GRADERS


A STUDY SESSION, HUH...
COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU AND YOUR SISTER ALSO HELD STUDY SESSIONS HERE
DID WE?

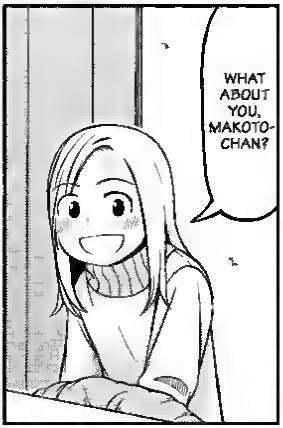
ALSO... I BAKED SOME COOKIES
COULD YOU BRING THEM IN WITH THE TEA AROUND 3?
SURE

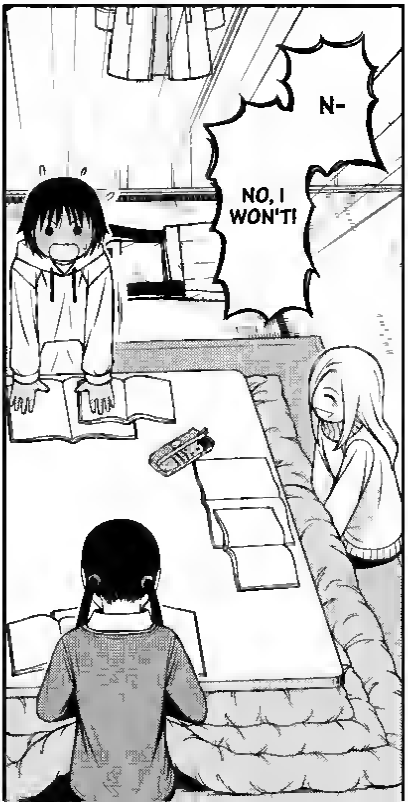
THIS IS HARD...
ムズかしい...
HEY
DID YOU TWO GO ANYWHERE FOR NEW YEAR'S?
SHIMAZAKI-SAN
LET'S REFRAIN FROM TALKING UNTIL WE TAKE A BREAK
RIGHT
DON'T BE SO HARSH
A LITTLE CHIT-CHAT IS FINE
WELL, I GUESS A BIT IS OKAY


I VISITED MY RELATIVES TO WISH THEM A HAPPY NEW YEAR.
I HAVE LOTS OF RELATIVES.
SO I GOT LOTS OF OTOSHIDAMA.
WOW, LUCKY.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO BUY WITH THE MONEY FROM YOUR OTOSHIDAMA, ARISA-CHAN?
UM... GAMES, MAYBE.
IF YOU KEEP PLAYING GAMES, YOU'LL BECOME STUPID.

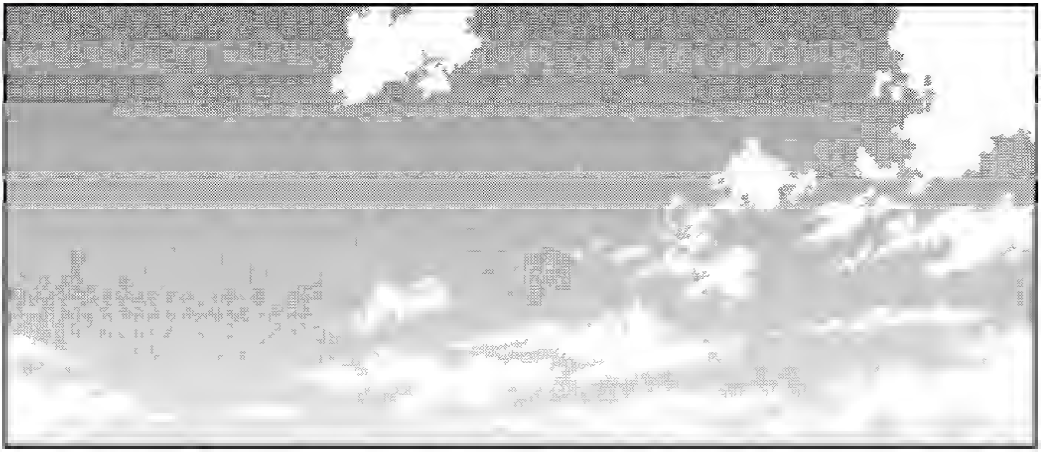
OH, I JUST WENT TO THE SHRINE FOR NEW YEAR'S.


WHAT ABOUT YOU, MAKOTO-CHAN?

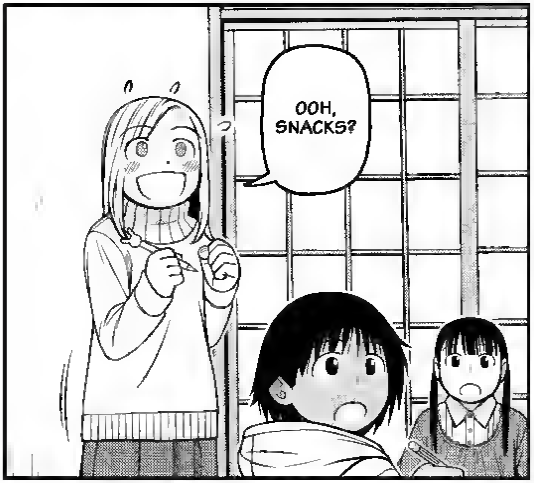

N-
NO, I WON'T!

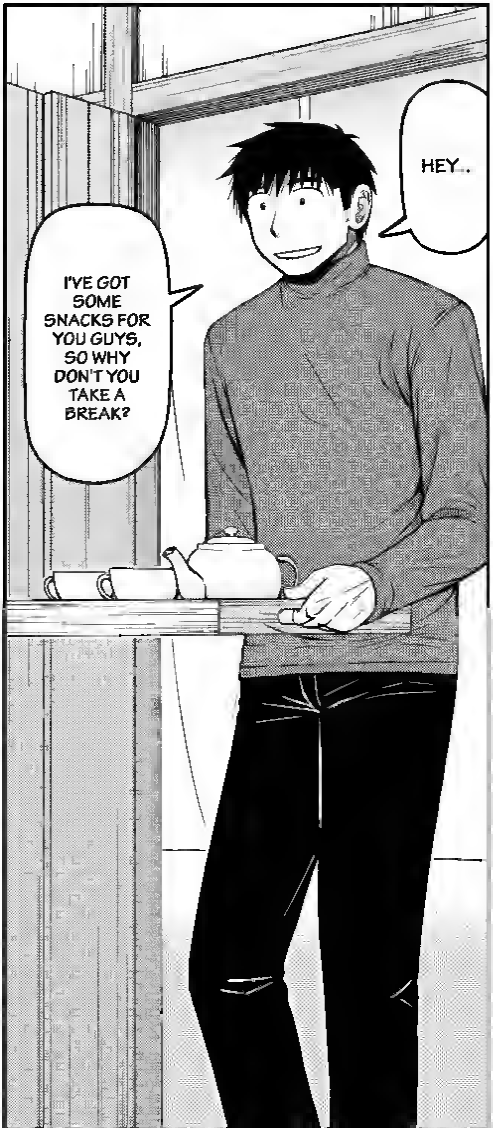
TODAY'S ACTUALLY THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN OUT SINCE THEN.
WHAT ARE YOU, A SHUT-IN?

I-I THINK SO...
DO THOSE TWO ACTUALLY GET ALONG?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S A SHUT-IN WITH ALL THE GAMES YOU PLAY!
N-
NO, I'M NOT!



KNOCK
KNOCK
I'M COMING IN

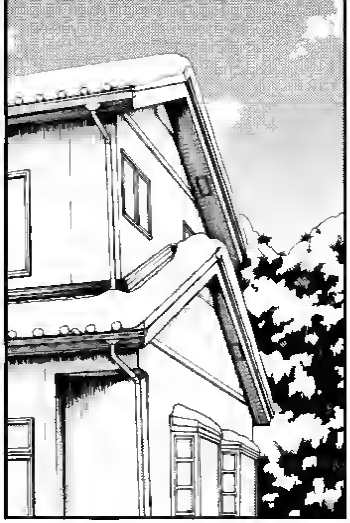

OOH, SNACKS?

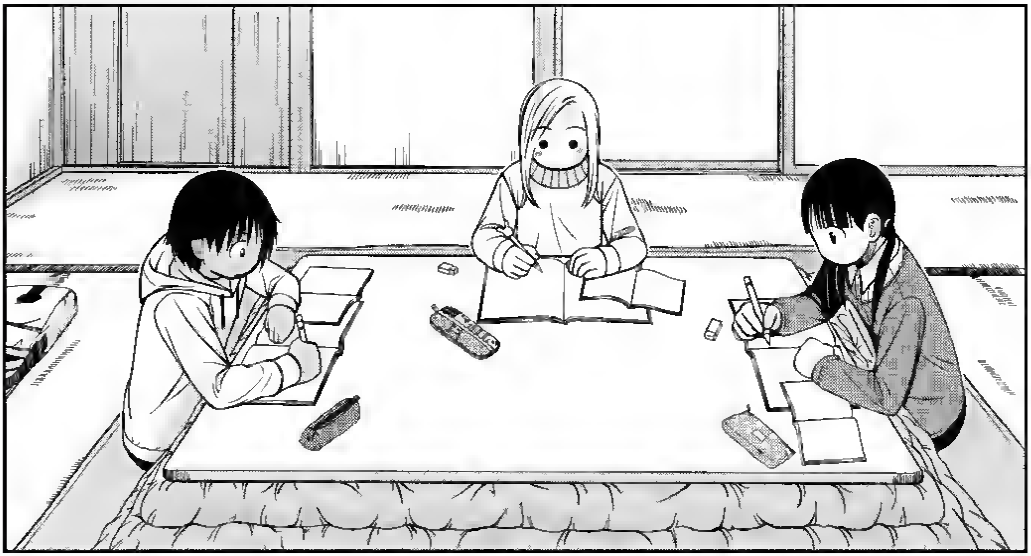

HEY..
I'VE GOT SOME SNACKS FOR YOU GUYS, SO WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A BREAK?

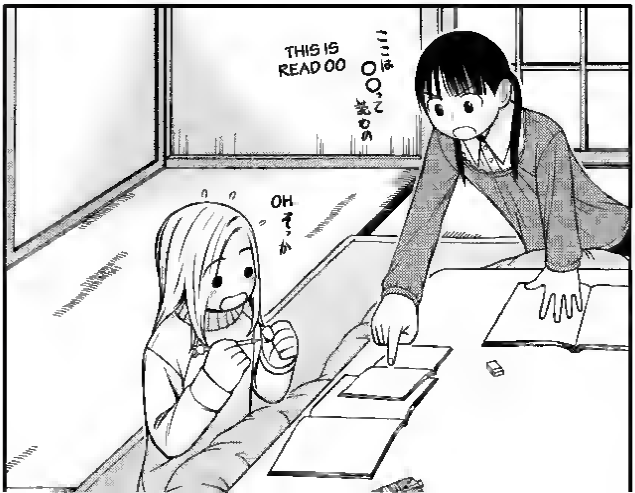
LET'S TAKE A BREAK, EVERY-ONE!
YEAH
THANK YOU FOR THE FOOD

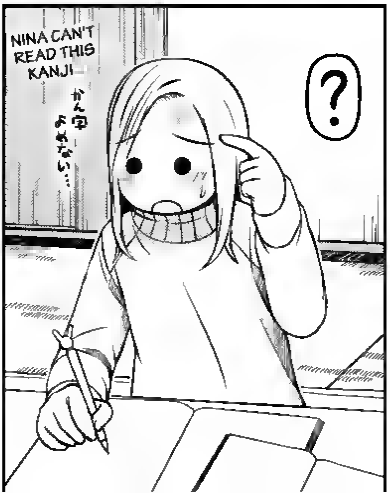
ポリッ
CRUNCH
あ、おいしい
OH, IT'S YUMMY!
こっちのほうがオトナの味ってかんじがしたよ
THESE TASTE KINDA GROWN-UP
HUH
私はお年玉でお人形の洋服を買うつもりなの
I'M GOING TO BUY DOLL CLOTHES WITH MY OTOSHI-DAMA
球体関節人形って言ってた
MY DOLL IS BALL-JOINTED
WOW
小日向はそんなシュミ持ってたのか
I DIDN'T KNOW KOHINA LIKED THAT KIND OF STUFF

OKAY.
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET BACK TO WORK.

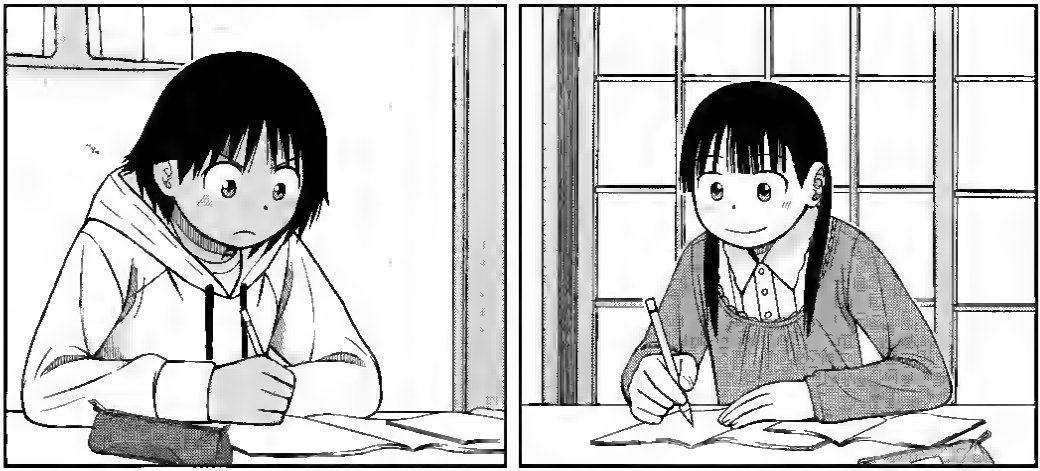


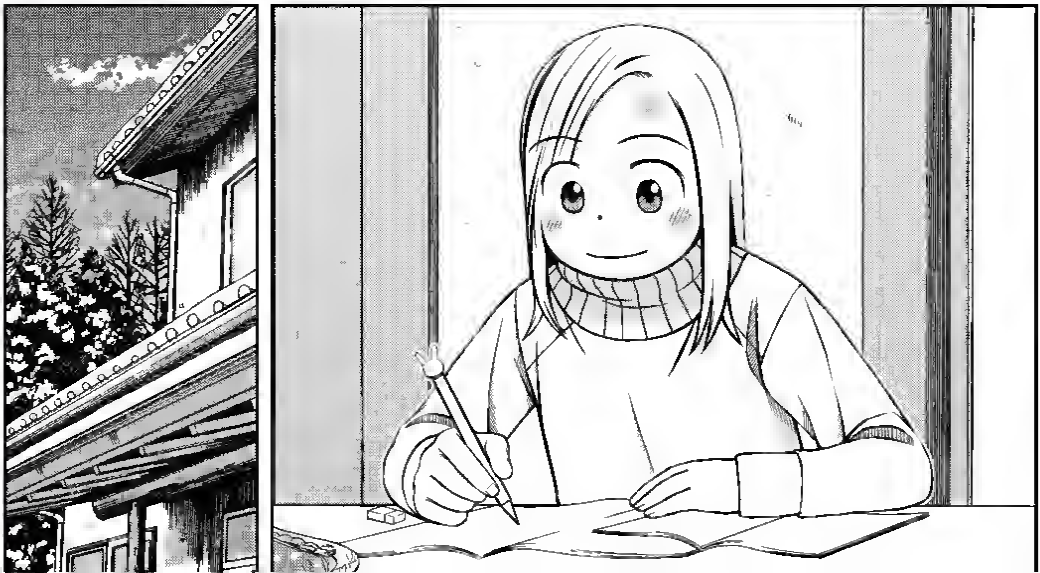


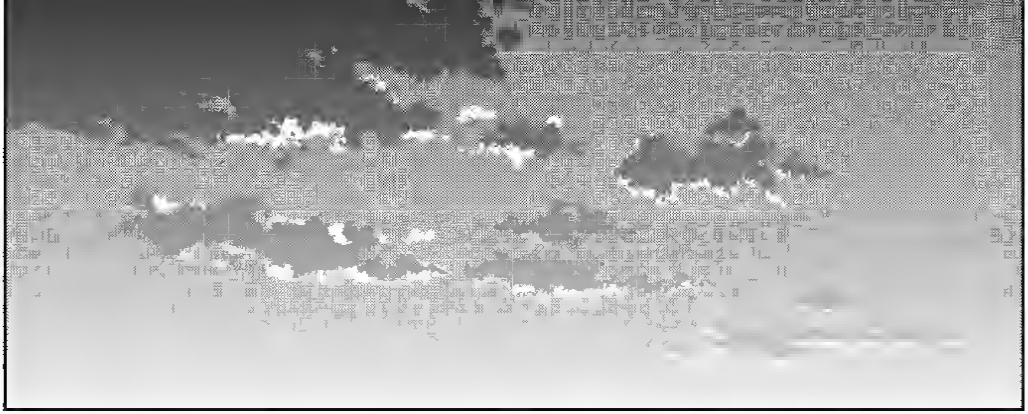

THIS IS READ OO
OH


NINA CAN'T READ THIS KANJI
?

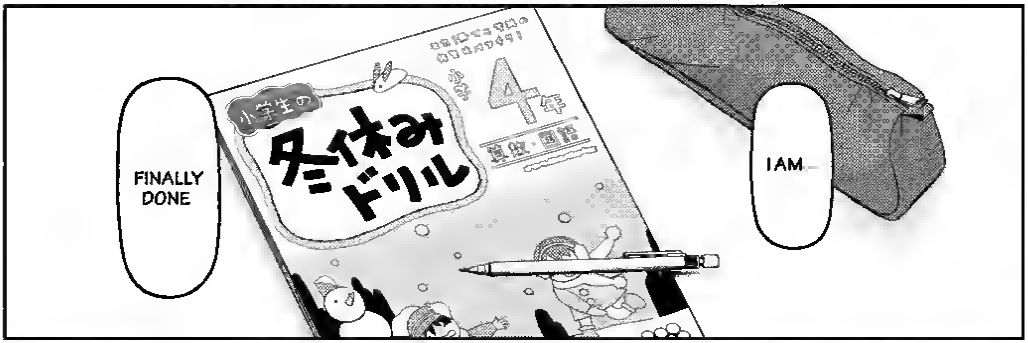
I HAVE TWO
私は2つ持ってます
YOU CAN BORROW MINE.
THANK YOU
HERE
OOPS,
LOOKS LIKE I FORGOT MY ERASER.

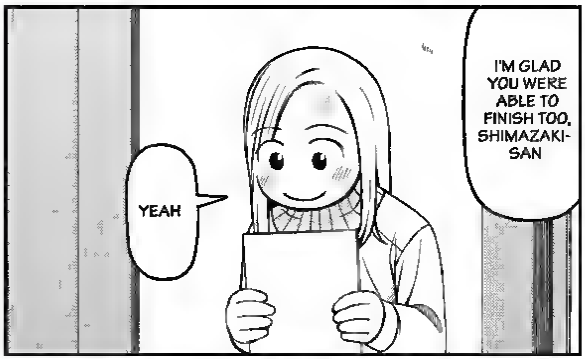






BOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WINTER BREAK DRILLS

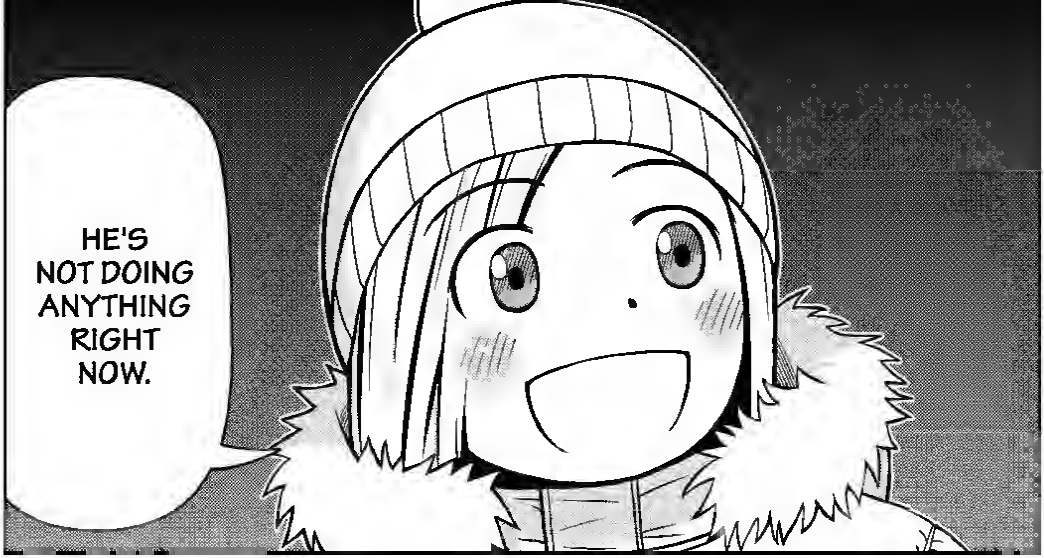




IT'S ALMOST 8
WHOA.

NOT A PROBLEM.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
SHUTARO-SAN,
THANKS FOR WALKING US HOME.

UNLIKE TOKYO...
WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN, THE SKY GETS PITCH BLACK HERE.
IT'S DIFFERENT IN TOKYO?
WELL, THERE'RE CONVE-NIENCE STORES EVERY-WHERE.
SO IT'S STILL PRETTY BRIGHT AT NIGHT.
WEREN'T YOU WORKING IN TOKYO, SHUTARO-SAN?
YEAH, I CAME BACK HERE LAST SUMMER.
WHERE ARE YOU WORKING NOW?
HUH?
UH... RIGHT NOW, I...
?


HE'S NOT DOING ANYTHING RIGHT NOW.

UN-EMPLOYED.
SHUTARO IS CURRENTLY...

EH?
...

IDIOT.
WHISPER
THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FREELANCE AND JOBLESS.
WHISPER
REALLY?
WHISPER WHISPER
WHISPER
SO YOU'RE A FREE-LANCER?
UM...
THAT SEEMS ROUGH.
BUT I'M SURE YOU HAVE YOUR REASONS.
SO I'M SORRY.
Y-YEAH...

NO, YOU'RE NOT UNCOOL, SHUTARO.
SO IT'S OKAY.
...
I'M SORRY, NINA
...
I WAS REALLY UNCOOL BACK THERE
?
WELL, NOW THAT IT'S A NEW YEAR...
IT'S TIME TO TURN OVER A NEW LEAF!
TURN OVER A NEW LEAF?
シンチャオ?
NINA DOESN'T REALLY GET IT, BUT DO YOUR BEST SHUTARO
HE'LL BE FINE WITH HER SUPPORT!

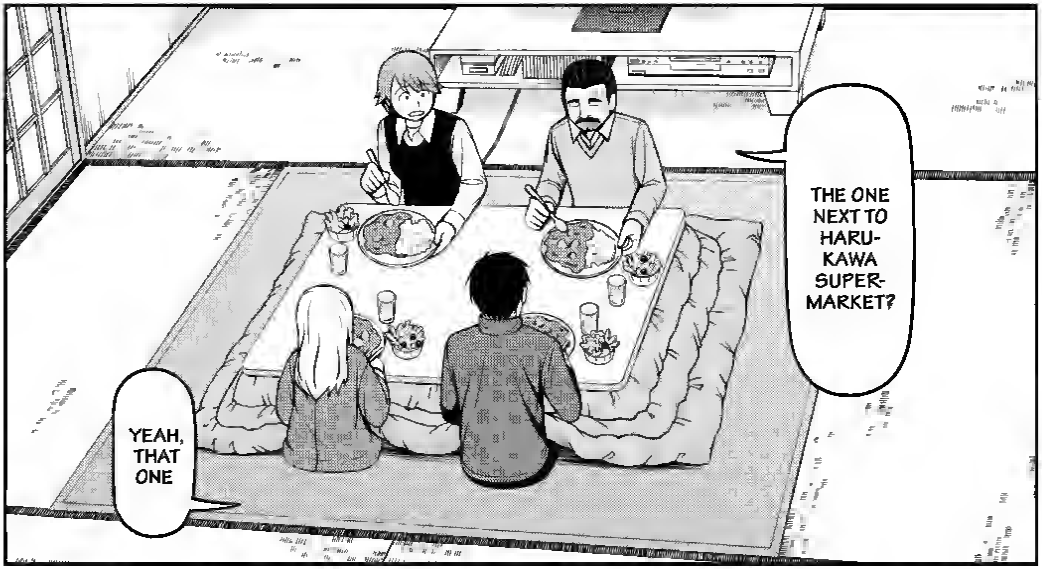
CHAPTER 56

WITHIN THE SNOW

BANNER: ICE GUARD

WHOOSH
SCRUNCH
HIGH OCTANE
155
REGULAR
144
DIESEL
122
I KEEP SHOVELING AND SHOVELING, BUT I'M NOT GETTING ANY-WHERE.
WHEW.
I'M BEAT.

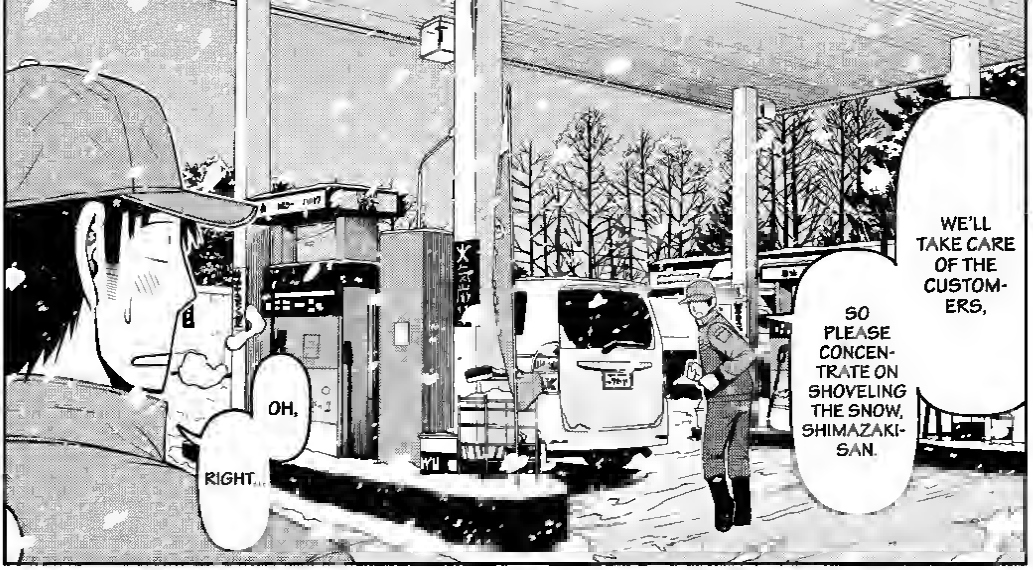
YOU'RE WORKING PART-TIME AT A GAS STATION?


THE ONE NEXT TO HARU-KAWA SUPER-MARKET?
YEAH, THAT ONE

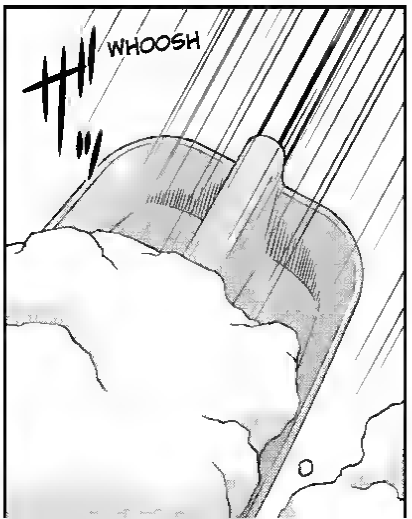
I CHECKED OUT THE BULLETIN BOARD NEXT TO THE CONVE-NIENCE STORE THE LAST TIME I WAS THERE
AND THERE WAS A FLYER FOR THE GAS STATION
SO I WENT THERE, AND THEY HIRED ME

MAN, I MUST HAVE GOOD LUCK IF I WAS ABLE TO GET A JOB AT A PLACE LIKE THAT.
I START TOMORROW.
IT'S JUST UNTIL APRIL, BUT YEAH.
SO YOU GOT A JOB, SHUTARO?
HUH?
...
SUCH AS?
THAT YOU FORGOT SOMETHING THAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT?
SHUT-ARO,
COULD IT BE THAT YOU LIVED IN TOKYO SO LONG...
THE FORE-CAST?
DIDN'T YOU LOOK AT THE WEATHER FORE-CAST?

GS
OH.
TO THINK THAT THE SNOW...
...WOULD BE SO BAD ON MY FIRST DAY OF WORK.
WHOOSH
HELLO!
VRRR..
VRRR..
MAY-BE
I'VE MADE A MIS-TAKE.



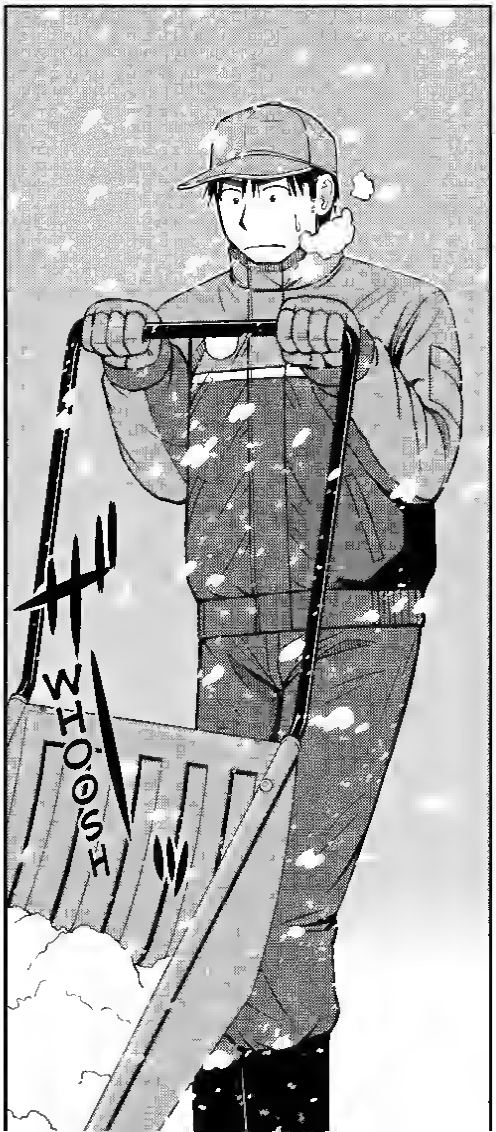
BANNER: CAR WASH FAIR

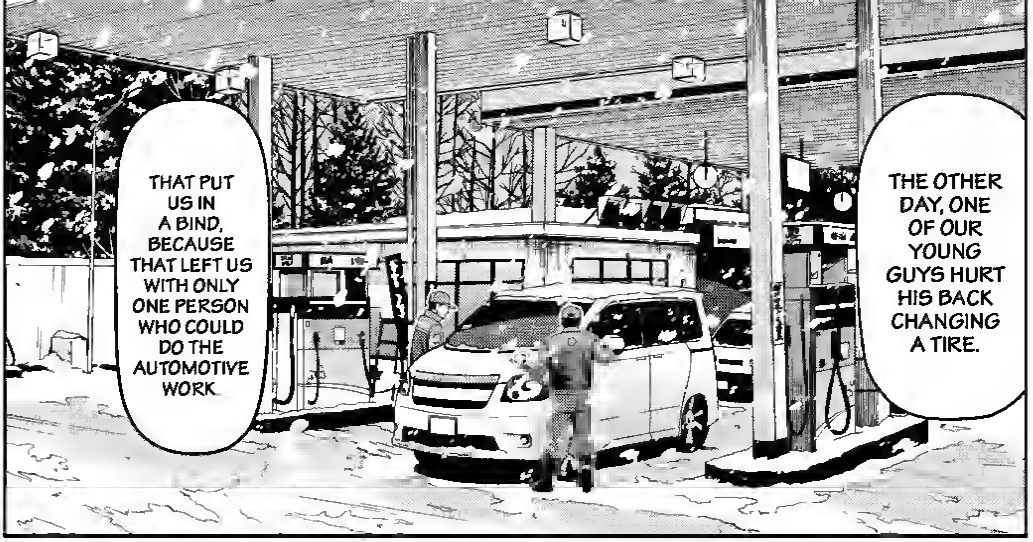


GOOD WORK, SHIMA-ZAKI-KUN

BOSS

IT'S OKAY.
HEY, I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO SHOVEL SNOW ALL DAY.


WHOOSH

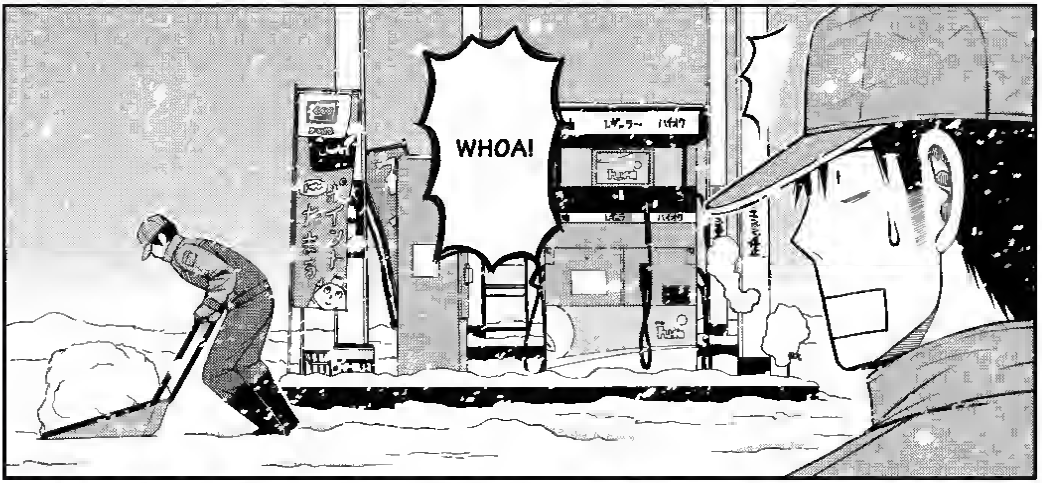

THE OTHER DAY, ONE OF OUR YOUNG GUYS HURT HIS BACK CHANGING A TIRE.
THAT PUT US IN A BIND, BECAUSE THAT LEFT US WITH ONLY ONE PERSON WHO COULD DO THE AUTOMOTIVE WORK.

AND THEN THIS WEATHER...
YOU'RE A LIFE SAVER, SHIMAZAKI-KUN.
I SEE.

THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE TOMORROW AND THE DAY AFTER, SO...
BE CAREFUL NOT TO HURT YOUR BACK.
OKAY, GO TAKE YOUR 30-MINUTE BREAK NOW.
YES, SIR.

毎週水曜
休憩おわり…
MY BREAK'S OVER

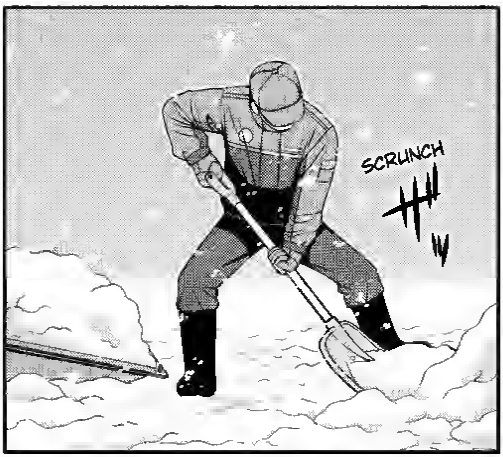
SUSTI
SLOUCH
ぐったり…

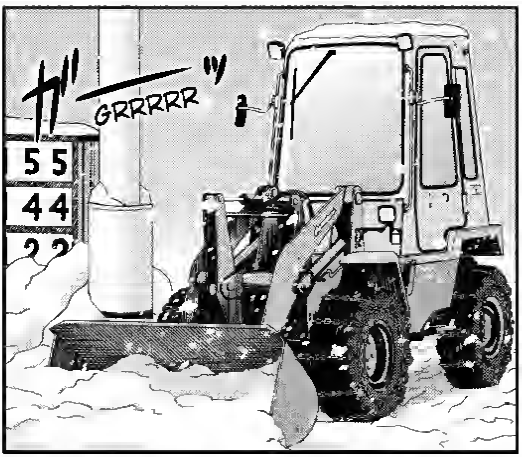

WHOA!

WHOOSH

IT PILED UP THIS MUCH IN 30 MINUTES?

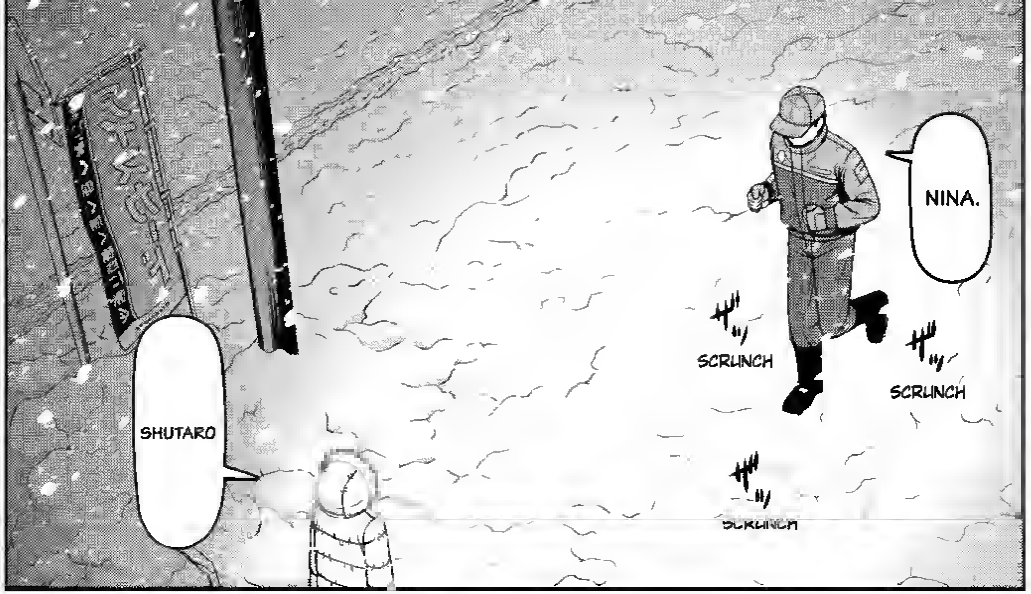
OKAY
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THE LARGE SPOTS WITH OUR PLOW,
SO PLEASE FOCUS ON OVER THERE, SHIMA-ZAKI-SAN.


SCRUNCH


GRRRRR
55
44
22

DRAG
DRAG
DRAG
DRAG

Auto Care
SHIMA-ZAKI-SAN.
YES?
毎週水曜日
レディースDAY
SIGN: EVERY WEDNESDAY IS LADIES DAY
NINA?
DO YOU KNOW THAT GIRL?
EH?


NINA.
SCRUNCH
SCRUNCH
SCRUNCH
SHUTARO

NINA WANTED TO SEE YOU WORK.

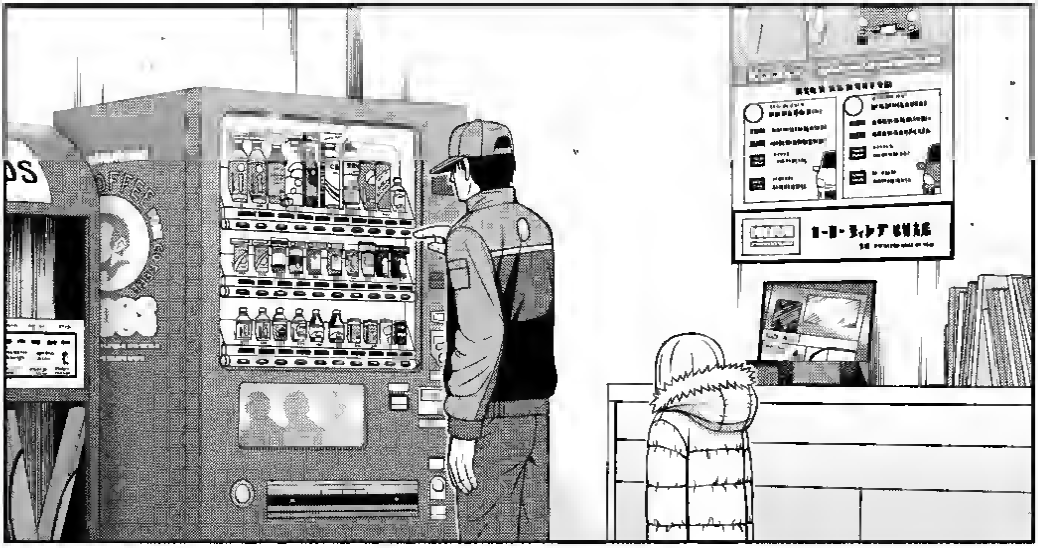
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO IF YOU CATCH A COLD?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUTSIDE IN THIS SNOW?

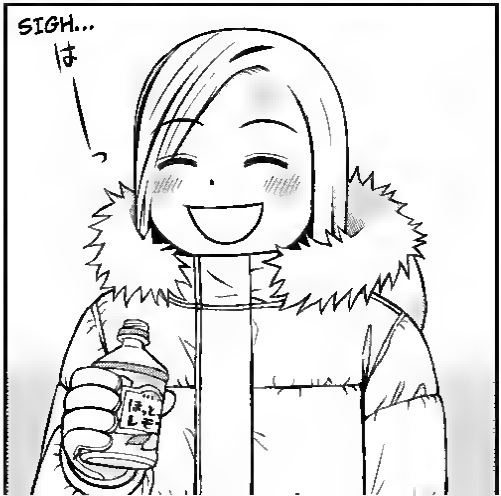
UM,
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO COME ON SUCH A CRAPPY DAY.

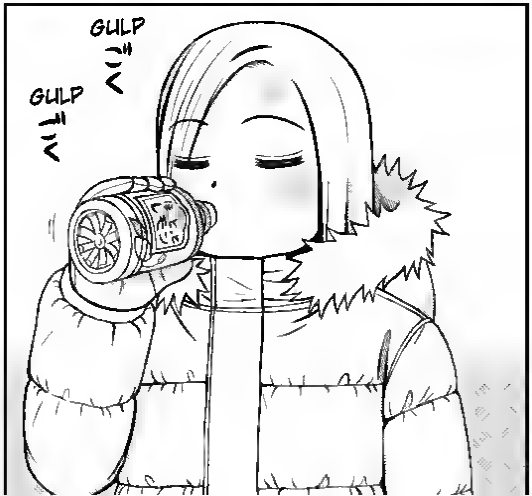
YUP.
YOU WANTED TO WATCH ME WORK?

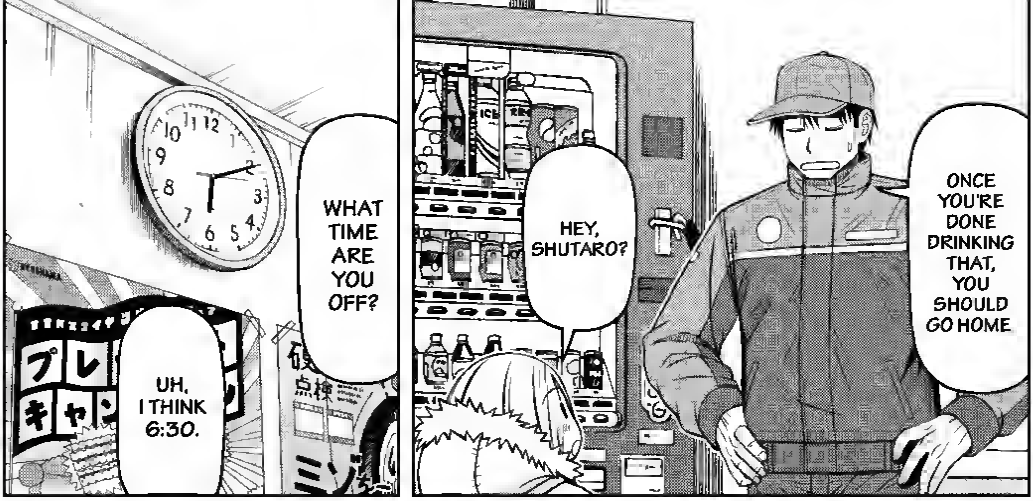
COME INSIDE AND GET SOMETHING WARM TO DRINK...
ANY-WAY...

...




SIGH...
はっ


GULP
ごく
GULP
ごく

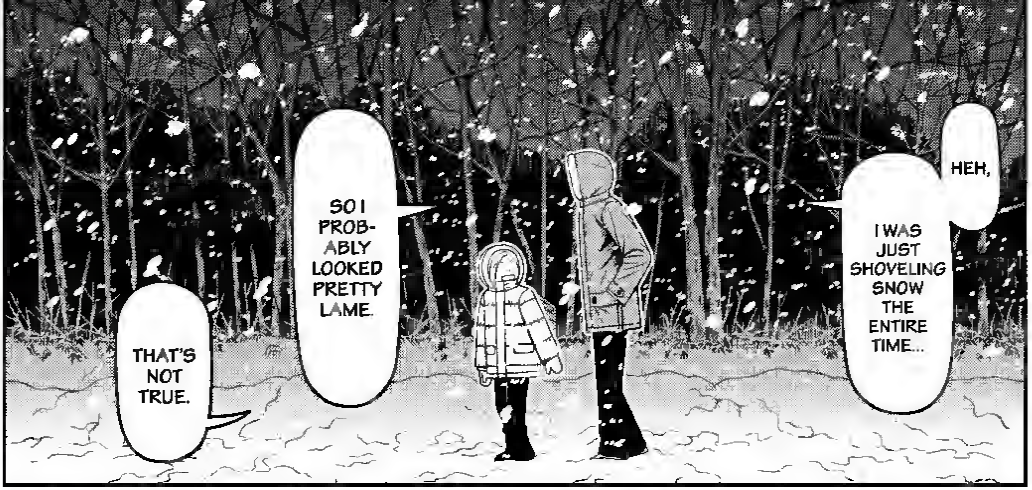

WHAT TIME ARE YOU OFF?
UH, I THINK 6:30.
HEY, SHUTARO?
ONCE YOU'RE DONE DRINKING THAT, YOU SHOULD GO HOME

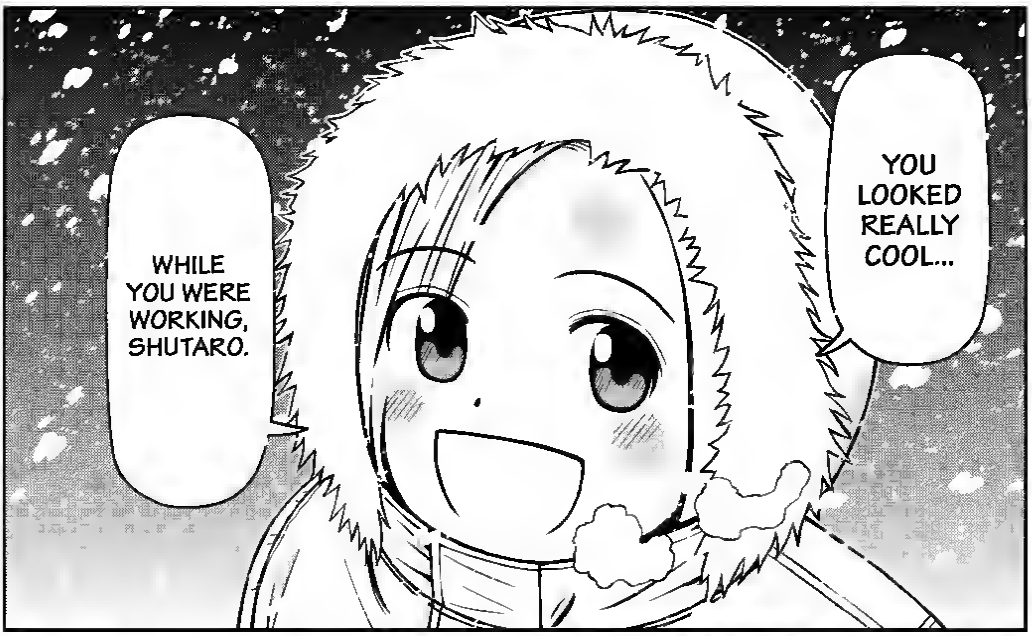
¥120
¥120
¥120
¥120
THEN NINA WILL WAIT.
¥120
¥120

OKAY,
WE CAN GO HOME TOGETHER
YAY

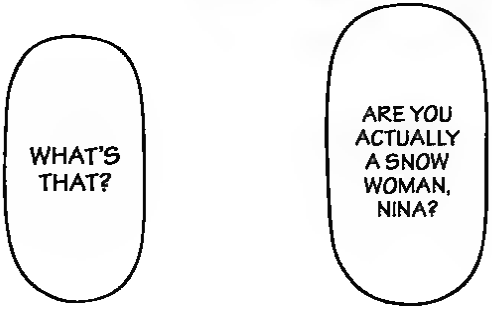
LET'S GO HOME TOGETHER
...

HMM.
HOW LONG WERE YOU WATCHING?
HUH?
MAN, I'M TIRED.
YOU WORKED REALLY HARD, SHUTARO.
ONLY FOR ABOUT 30 MINUTES
EH?
THAT LONG?


HEH,
I WAS JUST SHOVELING SNOW THE ENTIRE TIME...
SO I PROB-ABLY LOOKED PRETTY LAME.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.


YOU LOOKED REALLY COOL...
WHILE YOU WERE WORKING, SHUTARO.

Y-
YOU THINK?



OH, THE BLISS OF BEING CALLED COOL.

CHAPTER 57

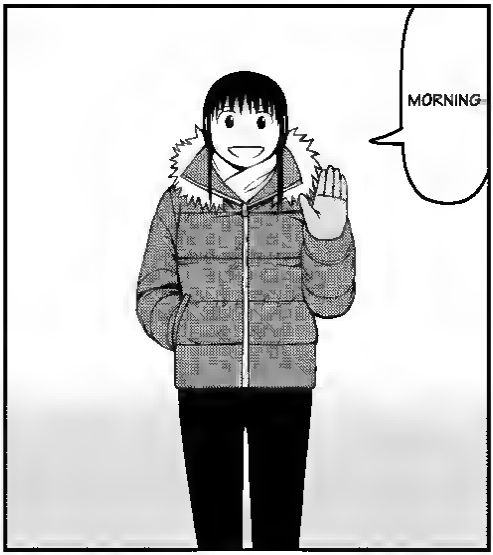
WALKING IN THE WINTERTIME

IT'S HARD TO WALK WHEN IT'S COLD OUT, BUT IT'S STILL FUN!

THE MIDDLE OF WINTER HAS BROUGHT SNOW, SNOW, SNOW AND MORE SNOW TO KITA-KARUIZAWA.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
WHEW
SCRUNCH
RUSTLE

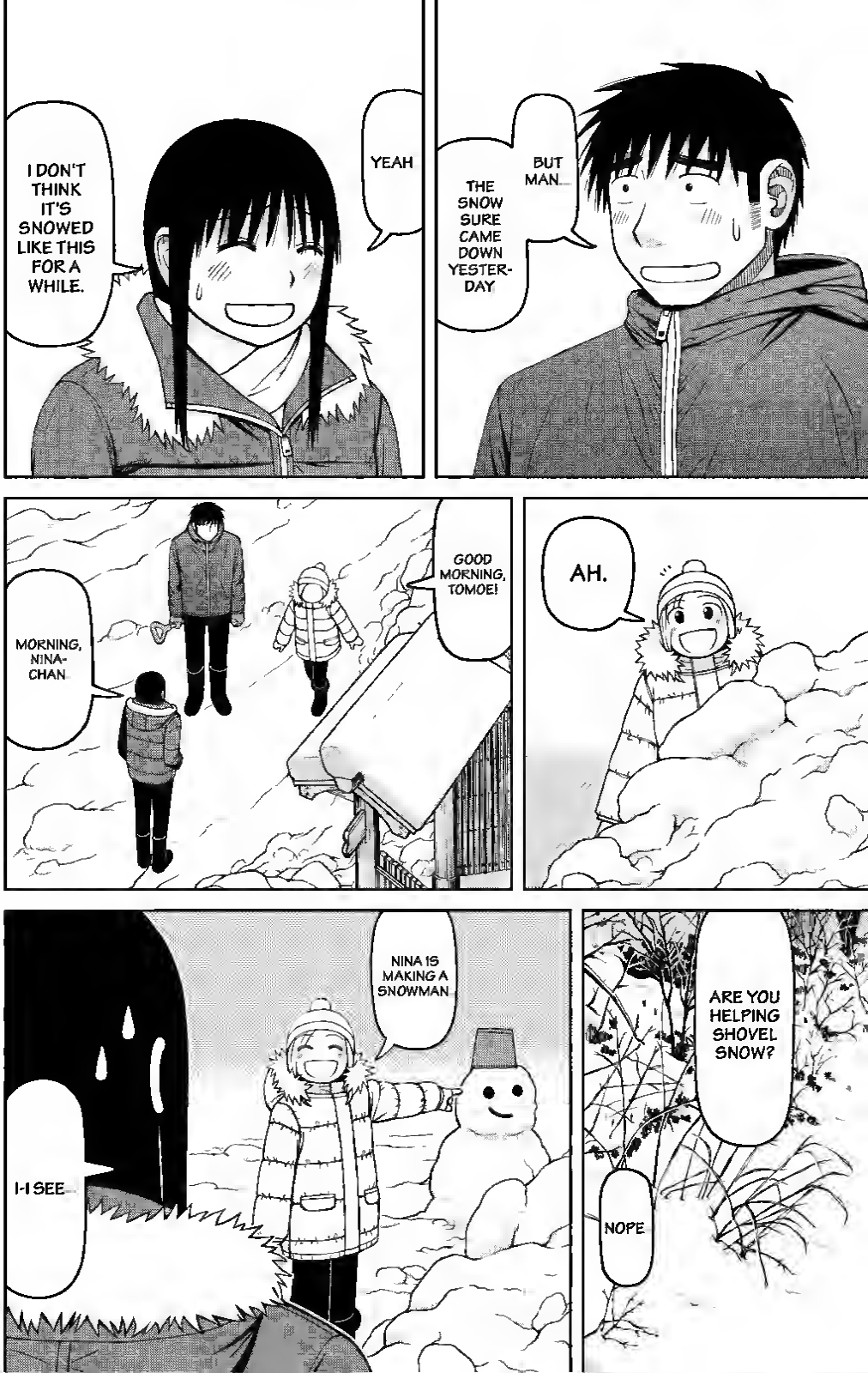
SHU

TOMOE
HEY


MORNING

YEAH, I WANTED TO FIT IN A WALK BEFORE I STARTED WORKING
I SEE

ISN'T IT A BIT EARLY TO BE OUT IF YOU DON'T START WORKING AT THE CAFÉ UNTIL 10?
NICE JOB ON THE SHOVEL-ING


I DON'T THINK IT'S SNOWED LIKE THIS FOR A WHILE.
YEAH
BUT MAN... THE SNOW SURE CAME DOWN YESTER-DAY.
MORNING, NINA-CHAN.
GOOD MORNING, TOMOE!
AH.
I-I SEE...
NINA IS MAKING A SNOWMAN.
NOPE.
ARE YOU HELPING SHOVEL SNOW?

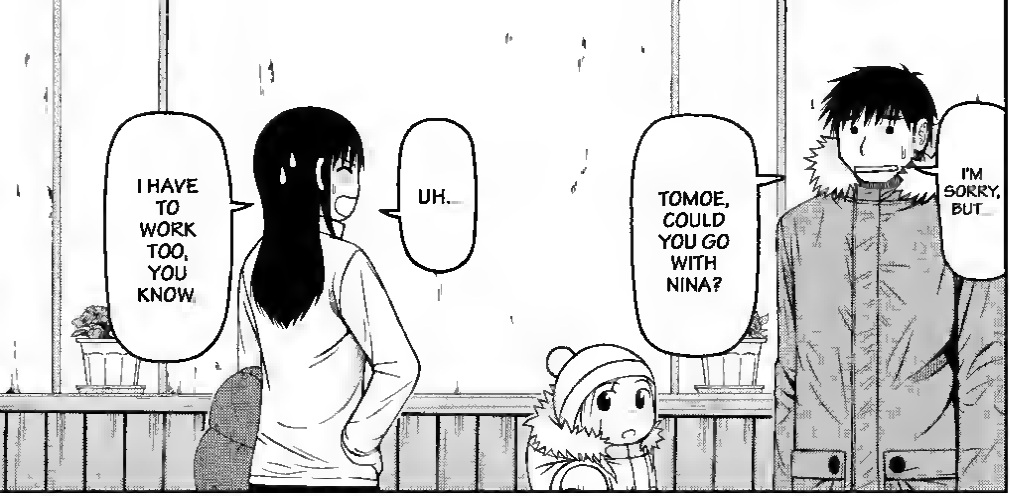
I'M GONNA HEAD TO WORK NOW, DAD
THOUGH I DIDN'T FINISH SHOVELING...
雪かき途中だけど
OKAY, WELL, THANKS FOR YOUR HARD WORK.

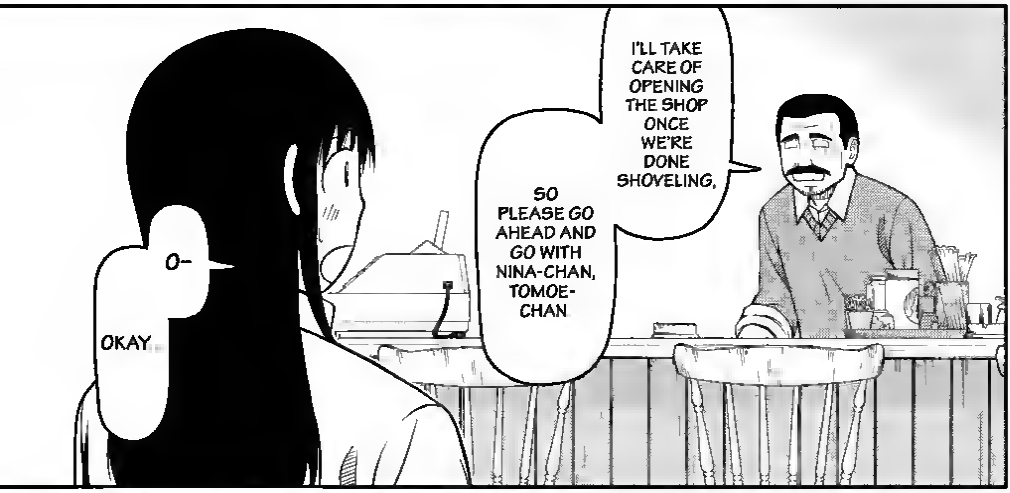
HM
SO YOU REALLY DID START WORKING AT THE GAS STATION, HUH?
YEAH
ALL RIGHT, I'M OFF
WAIT, SHUTARO
HM?
HEH
YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T NEED TO GET A JOB THAT WOULD HAVE YOU OUTSIDE AROUND THIS TIME OF YEAR.

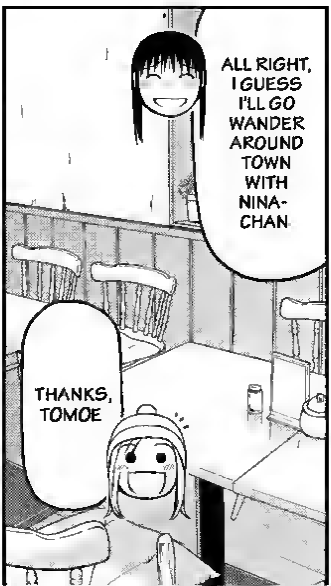
HUH?
SO LET'S GO TOGE-THER.
NINA'S GOING OUT, TOO...

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO IF YOU GET STUCK IN THE SNOW AND CAN'T COME HOME?
IT'S DANGER-OUS OUT THERE
NINA'S GOING TO WANDER AROUND THE CITY
GOING OUT?
WHERE TO?

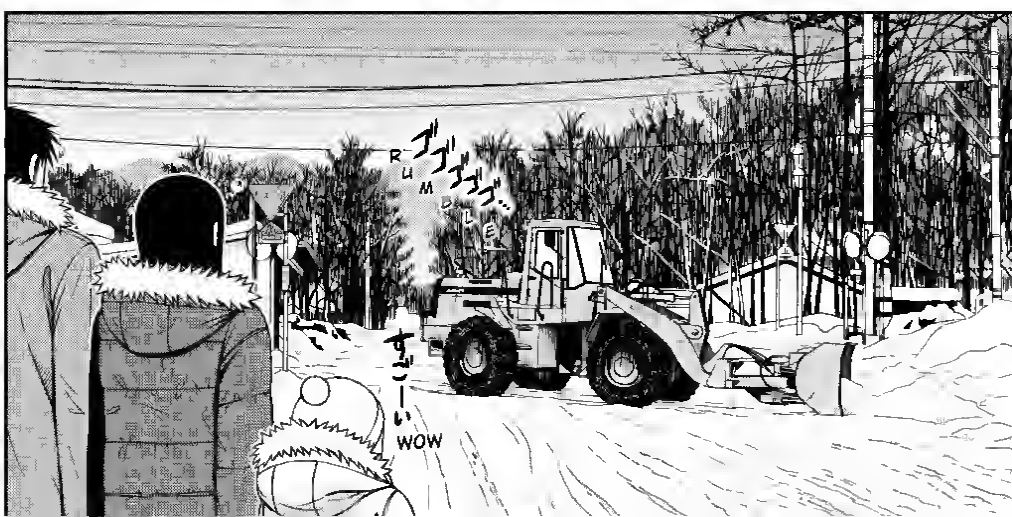
...
NINA WILL BE FINE.
AWW.

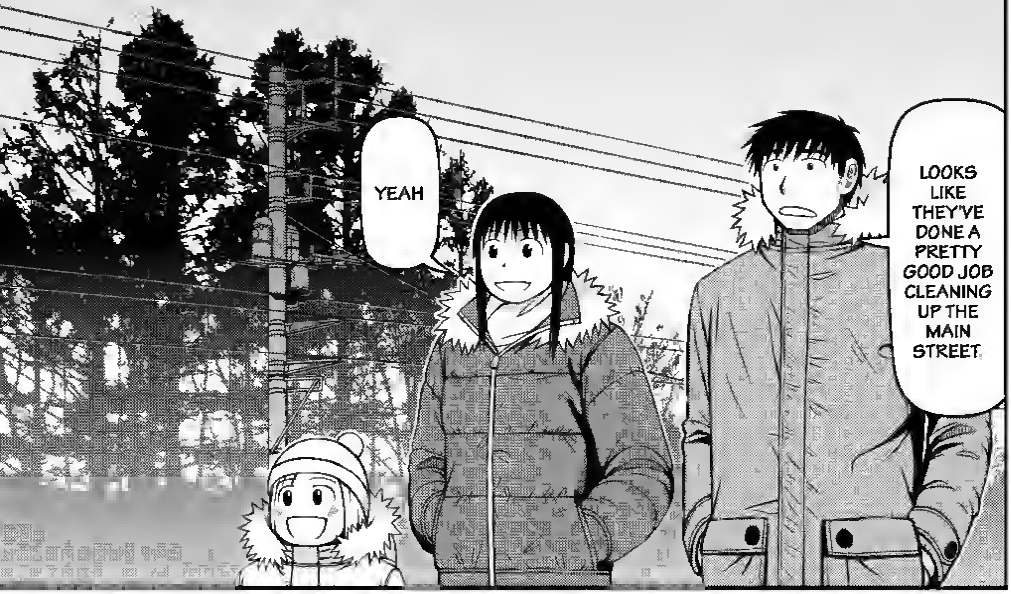

I'M SORRY, BUT...
TOMOE, COULD YOU GO WITH NINA?
UH...
I HAVE TO WORK TOO, YOU KNOW.


I'LL TAKE CARE OF OPENING THE SHOP ONCE WE'RE DONE SHOVELING.
SO PLEASE GO AHEAD AND GO WITH NINA-CHAN, TOMOE-CHAN
O-
OKAY.


ALL RIGHT, I GUESS I'LL GO WANDER AROUND TOWN WITH NINA-CHAN.
THANKS, TOMOE

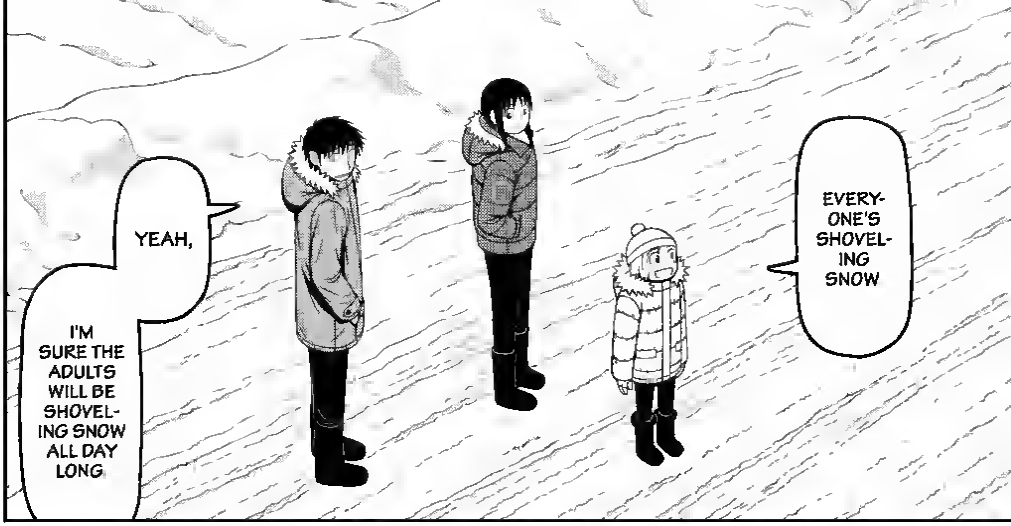
ゴゴゴゴゴゴ…
RUMBLE

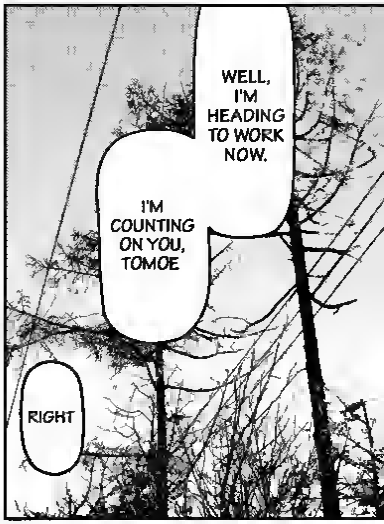

ゴゴゴゴゴ…
RUMBLE
すごーい
WOW

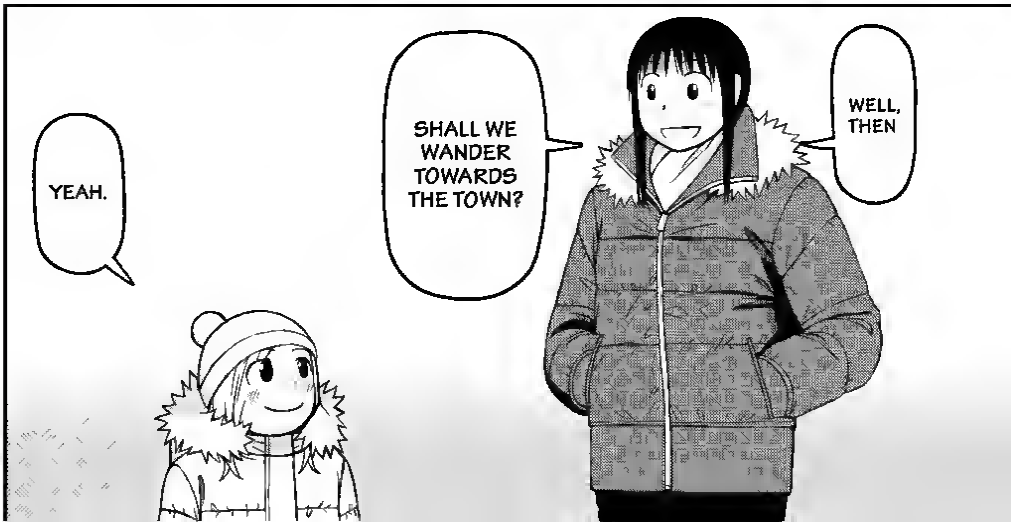

YEAH
LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE DONE A PRETTY GOOD JOB CLEANING UP THE MAIN STREET.

WHOOSH

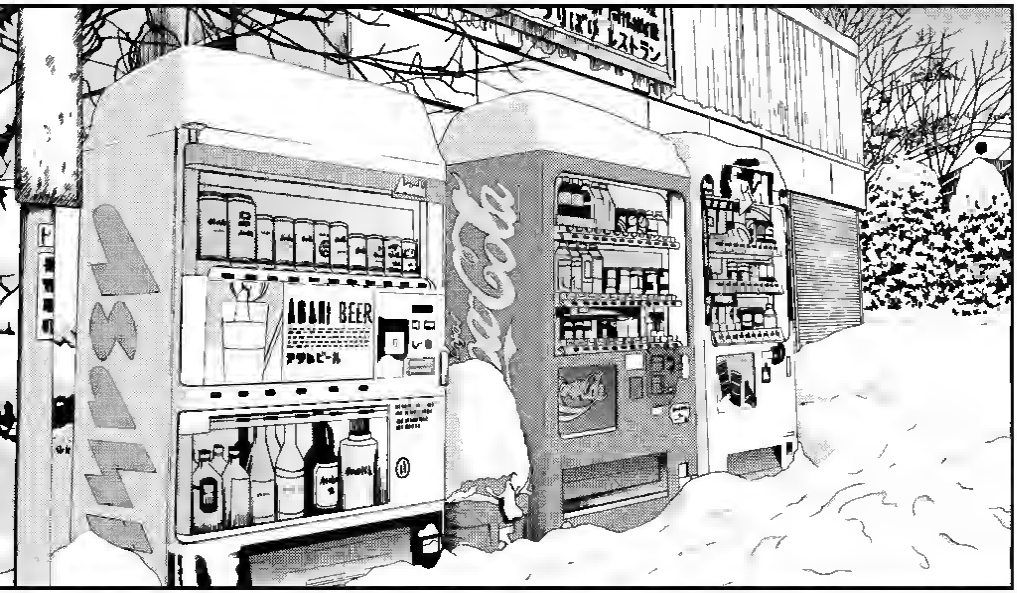
RUMBLE
RUMBLE


EVERY-ONE'S SHOVEL-ING SNOW
YEAH,
I'M SURE THE ADULTS WILL BE SHOVEL-ING SNOW ALL DAY LONG


WELL, I'M HEADING TO WORK NOW.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU, TOMOE
RIGHT


WELL, THEN
SHALL WE WANDER TOWARDS THE TOWN?
YEAH.

WELL, NINA WANTS TO SEE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.
SO YOU HAVE THE DAY OFF, BUT YOU'RE HEADING TO SCHOOL.
THEY CANCELED CLASS DUE TO THE AMOUNT OF SNOW.
WAIT, DON'T YOU HAVE SCHOOL TODAY, NINA-CHAN?
ROGER THAT.
LET'S HEAD TOWARDS THE SCHOOL.


BEER
Coca-Cola

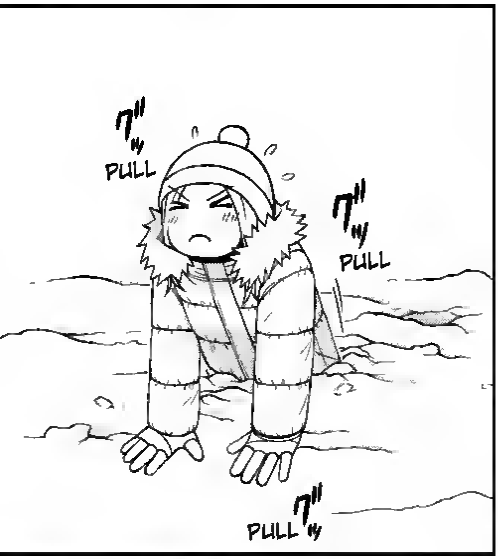
...
WOW
THEY HAVEN'T TOUCHED THE SNOW AT ALL.

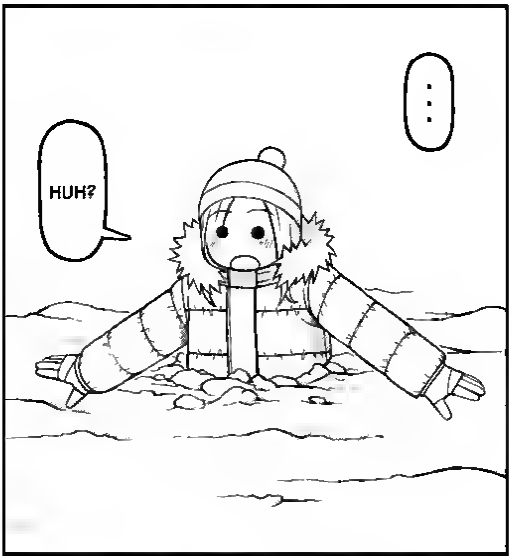
WHOA!
RUSTLE
YEAH, THE SCHOOL'S BURIED UNDER THE SNOW.
LOOKS LIKE NO ONE'S BEEN HERE
WAIT, NINA-CHAN
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
COME ON, TOMOE.
IT'LL GET DANGER-OUS IF YOU GO TOO FAR OUT.

NINA-CHAN
NO, WE COULD REALLY GET STUCK OUT HERE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
SMACK
KYA!
TAKE THAT!
FWOOSH
TOMOE, HURRY!
AWW
JEEZ
NOW YOU'VE DONE IT

SLIIIIIDE

JEEZ
も
AHAHA
あはは


PULL
PULL
PULL
PULL

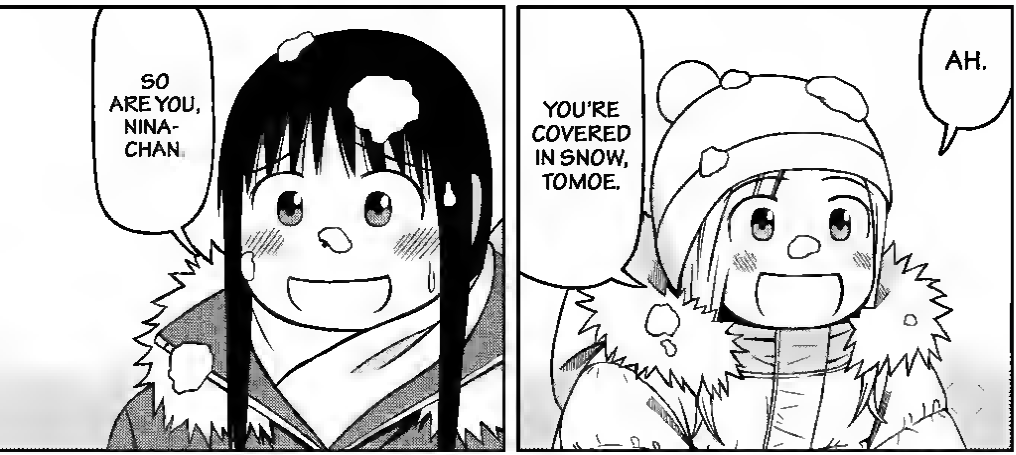

HUH?

HOLD STILL
OKAY

TOMOE,
NINA CAN'T MOVE
SEE?

HNNN...
HNNN...
ONE, TWO...
HNNN...
PULL HARDER.
TOMOE
KYA!
THUD

OW...
YOU'RE OUT.


AH.
YOU'RE COVERED IN SNOW, TOMOE.
SO ARE YOU, NINA-CHAN.

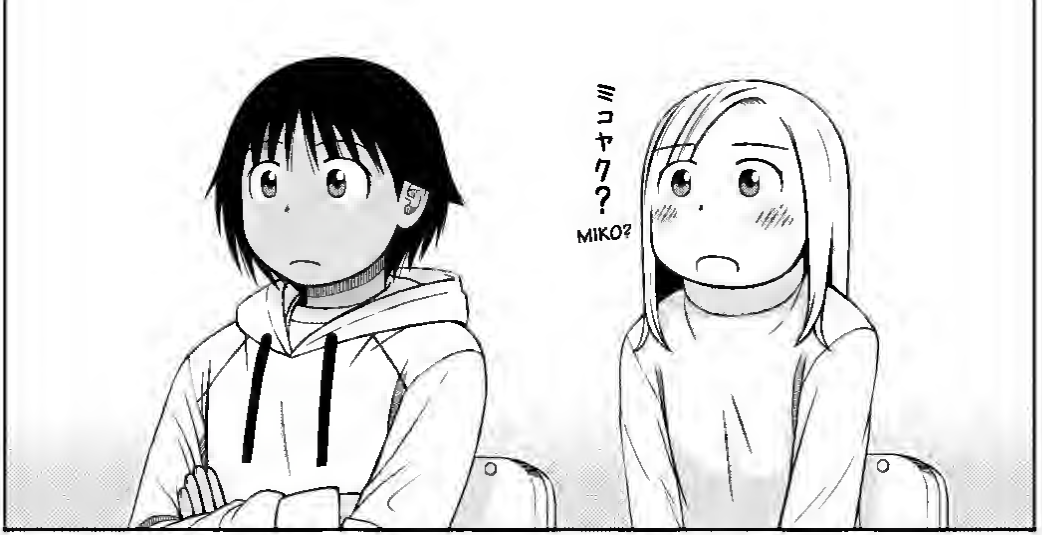
AHA HA HA HA HA
あはははは
HUH, NINA'S SHOES ARE MISS-ING
LOOKS LIKE THEY GOT LEFT IN THE SNOW
WHA?

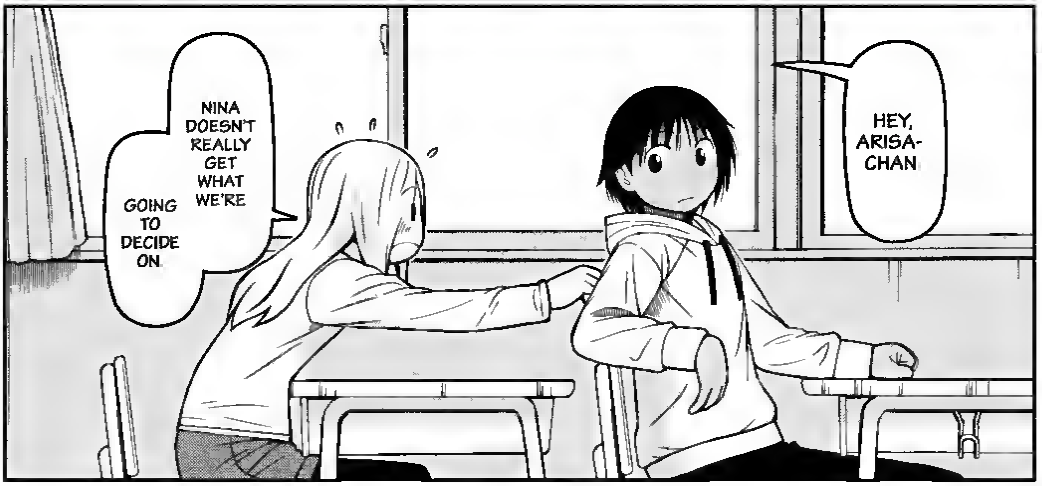
YDU LIKE CHALL-ENGES A BIT TOO MUCH, NINA-CHAN
WASN'T WAND-ERING AROUNO LOTS DF FUN?
EH...
WE CDULD HAVE REALLY GDTTEN STRANDED BACK THERE
TE HE HE
NINA LOVES CHALL-ENGES
大変だったんだね…
MUST HAVE BEEN RDUGH
THAT WASN'T A COMPLI-MENT.
TOMOE,
NEXT TIME IT SNOWS A LOT, LET'S GO WAND-ERING AGAIN
I'D RATHER NOT HAVE A REPEAT OF WHAT HAPP-ENED TODAY...

YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR KIDS IN THE SNOW!

CHAPTER 58
CONSIDERATION

ARE THE CHILDREN GETTING THEIR FAVORITE ROLE?
FOR THE FESTIVAL OF FLAMES THAT WILL HAPPEN LATER THIS MONTH...
THE FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADERS WILL HELP WITH THE LIGHTING CEREMONY...
...JUST LIKE THEY DO EVERY YEAR.
WE WILL CHOOSE WHO THAT WILL BE DURING TODAY'S CLASS MEETING.
ONE OF THE FOURTH GRADERS WILL PLAY THE PRIESTESS MIKO.


ミコャク?
MIKO?


HEY, ARISA-CHAN
NINA DOESN'T REALLY GET WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DECIDE ON

OH...
I GUESS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT
THERE'S A FESTIVAL NEXT MONTH
CALLED THE FESTIVAL OF FLAMES
THE FLAME FESTIVAL?

IT'S LIKE A FESTIVAL THAT USES FIRE.
PEOPLE LINE UP CANDLES IN THE SNOW TO CREATE IMAGES OF BIRDS AND STUFF.

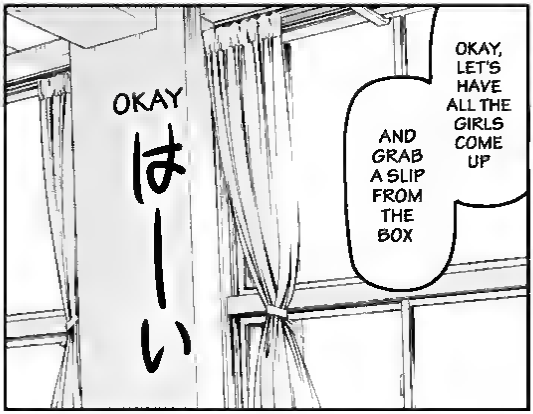
WOW...
THEY ALSO SET OFF A TON OF FIREWORKS LIKE THEY DO DURING THE SUMMER FESTIVALS TOO.

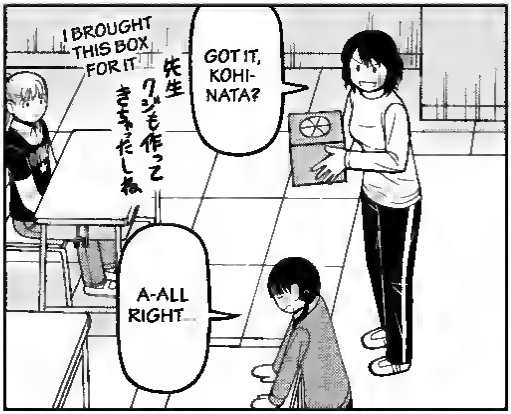
THAT SOUNDS FUN.
REALLY?

AND THE FOURTH GRADERS HELP WITH THAT.
THERE'S A FLAME-PASSING CEREMONY THAT SIGNALS THE START OF THE FESTIVAL.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I'D LIKE TO NOMINATE SHIMA-ZAKI-SAN.
AS FOR THE ROLE OF MIKO...
WHAT IS IT, SENSEI?
WAIT A SEC, KOHINATA
HUH?
NINA?
I WANNA BE THE MIKO, TOO
HUH?
AND I BELIEVE THAT SHIMA-ZAKI-SAN, THE CUTEST IN OUR CLASS...
IS THE BEST FIT FOR THE ROLE OF MIKO.
AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO DRAW NAMES FOR THIS?
WHAT-EVER, JUST HURRY UP AND PICK.
GOOD DAY
SENSEI, THE MEDIA WILL BE THERE.
WELL, YES, BUT...

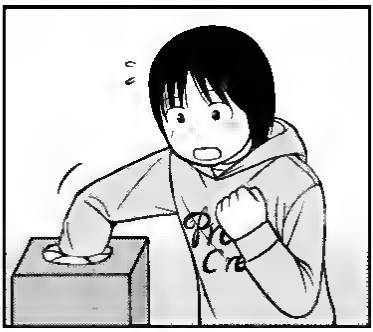
炎のまつり 巫女役
FESTIVAL OF FLAMES MIKO VOTING
THE MIKO WILL BE...
CHOSEN THROUGH A RANDOM DRAWING.


OKAY
はーい
OKAY, LET'S HAVE ALL THE GIRLS COME UP AND GRAB A SLIP FROM THE BOX


I BROUGHT THIS BOX FOR IT
先生クジも作ってきちゃだしね
GOT IT, KOHI-NATA?
A-ALL RIGHT...

I LOST.
ハズレね

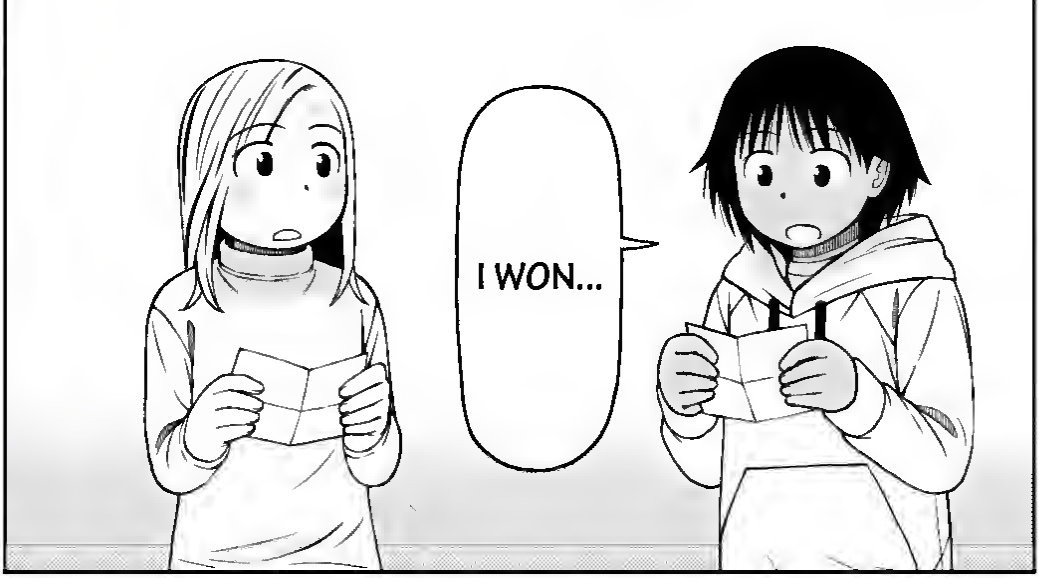
I LOST...
ハズレ...

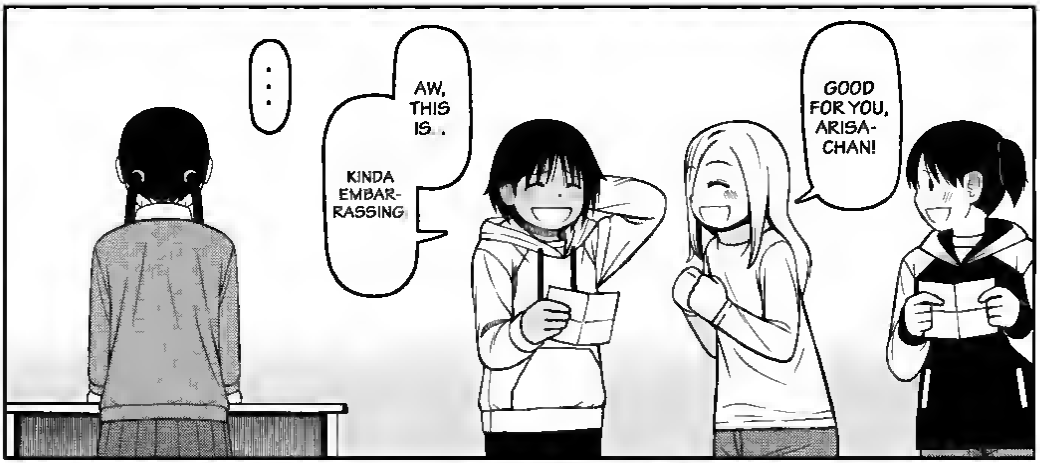


AH.
アタリ
WINNER

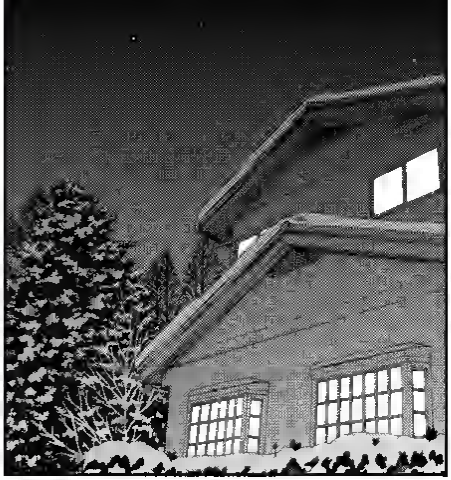
6

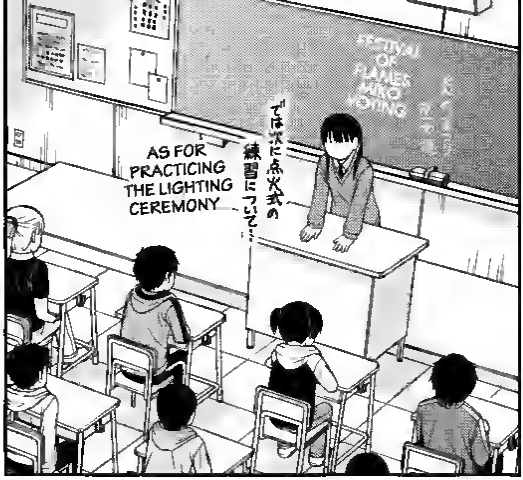
I LOST?
ハズレかー

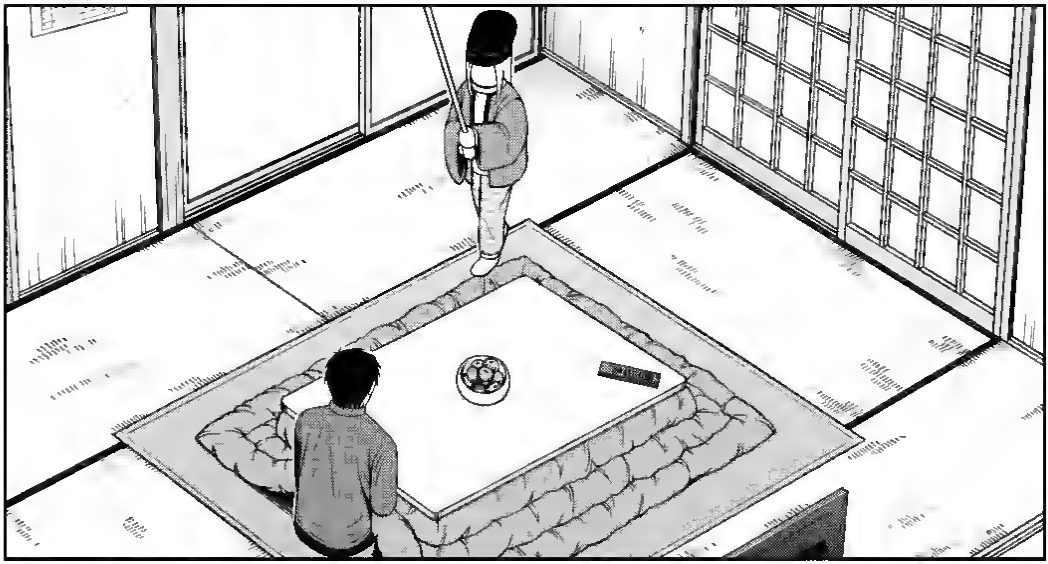

I WON...


...
AW, THIS IS KINDA EMBARRASSING
GOOD FOR YOU, ARISA-CHAN!

YOU'RE NOT EVEN TRYING TO HIDE YOUR ANNOYANCE, ARE YOU?
IT'S BEEN DECIDED, MORIKAWA-SAN WILL BE THE MIKO.
ALL RIGHT.

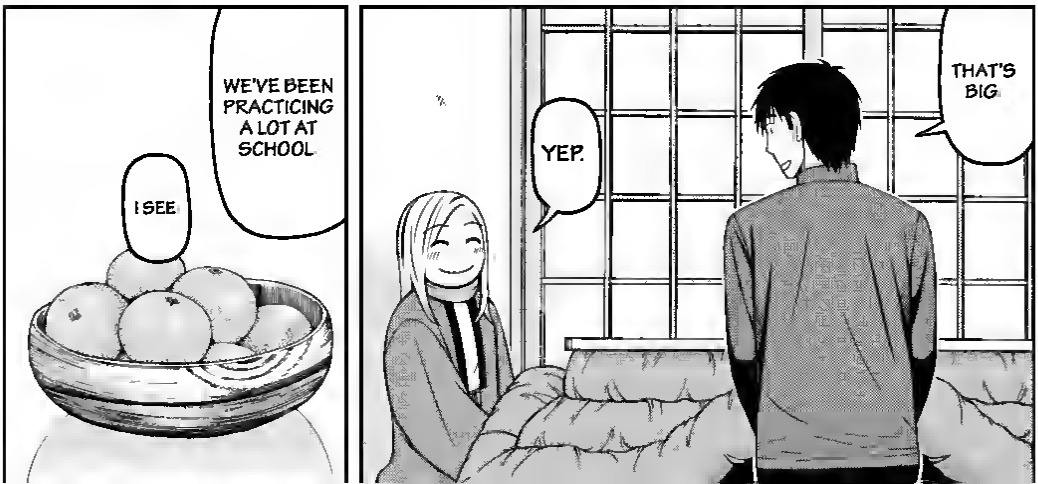



FESTIVAL OF FLAMES MIKO HOPING
AS FOR PRACTICING THE LIGHTING CEREMONY
では火に点火式の練習について

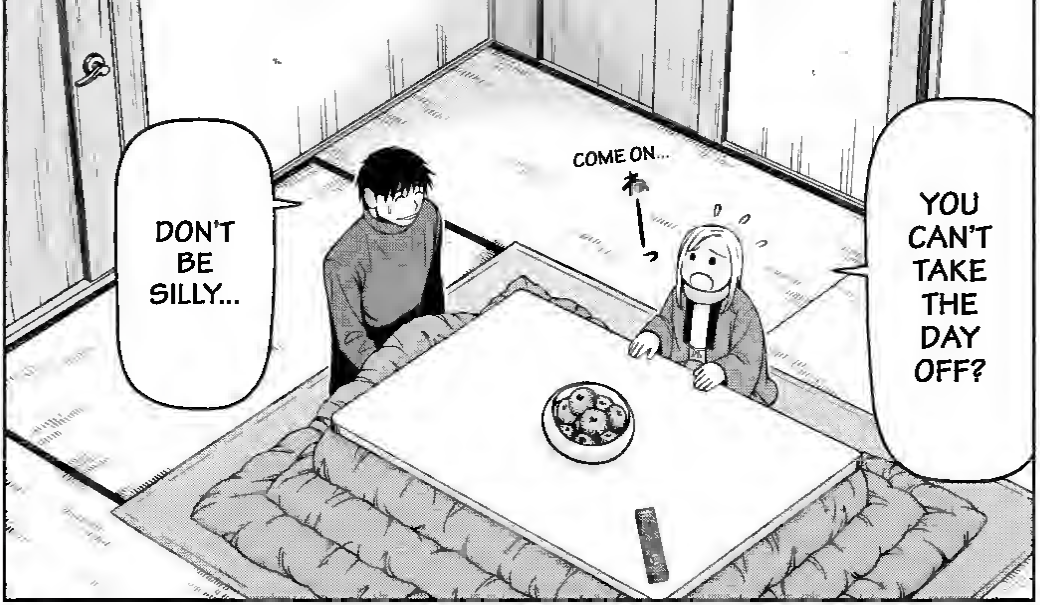


JEEZ
A CEREMONY, DUH
WHA?
IN THE WORLD HAVE YOU BEEN OOING?
WHAT

YOU GUYS ARE GOING TO BE HELPING OUT WITH THE LIGHTING CEREMONY
OH, I SEE

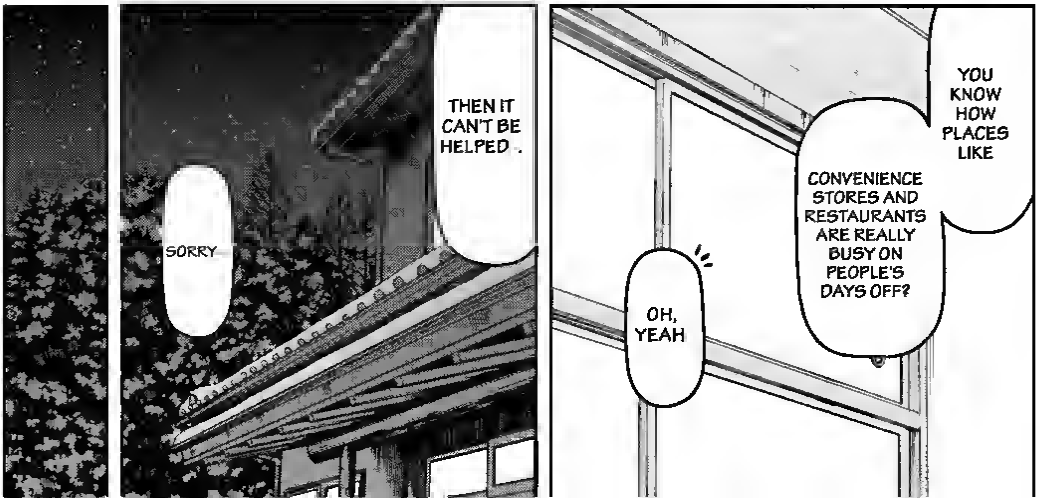

WE'VE BEEN PRACTICING A LOT AT SCHOOL
I SEE
YEP.
THAT'S BIG

I DON'T THINK I CAN.
UH...
COME SEE US AT THE FESTIVAL, SHUTARO.
HUH?
...
I'LL BE BUSY WITH WORK THAT DAY.
WHY?
WHAT?


DON'T BE SILLY...
COME ON...
YOU CAN'T TAKE THE DAY OFF?

CUSTOMER SERVICE?
何それ？
WHAT'S THAT?

WHEN YOU WORK IN CUSTOMER SERVICE, LIKE I DO AT THE GAS STATION, YOU GET REALLY BUSY ON EVENT DAYS.


SORRY
THEN IT CAN'T BE HELPED .
OH, YEAH
YOU KNOW HOW PLACES LIKE CONVENIENCE STORES AND RESTAURANTS ARE REALLY BUSY ON PEOPLE'S DAYS OFF?

MAN, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

HE GOT SO EXCITED THAT...
WHEN I TOLD MY DAD I WAS GONNA BE THE MIKO...

MAN, IT'S SO EMBAR-RASSING.
HE TOLD ME NOT TO WORRY BECAUSE HE'D GET IT ALL ON FILM.
...HE EVEN ORDERED A NEW VIDEO CAMERA.

I CAN HEAR EVERY WORD YOU'RE SAYING, YOU KNOW.
HEY!
MUMBLE
YOU'RE NOT ELEGANT ENOUGH
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
BUT I DD THINK NINA IS THE BEST ONE FOR THE JOB, TOD
MUMBLE
...
HUH?
HOW ABOUT YDU, NINA?
BUT I THINK NINA IS THE BEST ONE FOR THE JOB, TOO.
YOU SEEM DOWN, NINA. WHAT S WRONG?
DID YDU CATCH A COLD
SHIMA-ZAKI-SAN?
大丈夫?
ARE YOU OKAY?

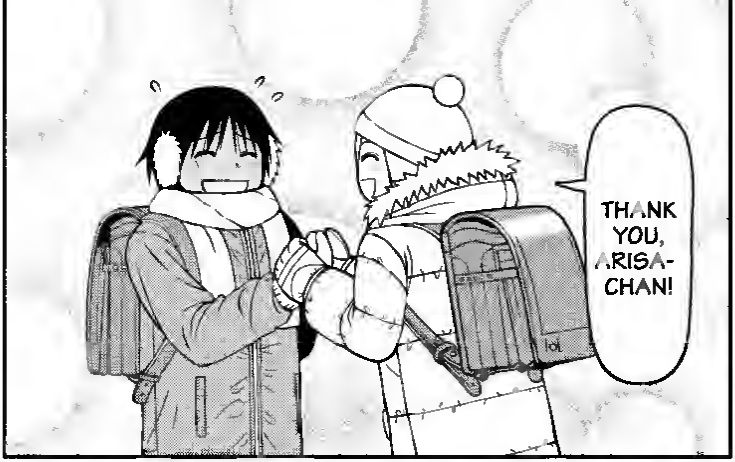
YEAH.
SO SHUTARO-SAN CAN'T COME TO THE FESTIVAL, HUH.
...
OH.
...
SHUTARO TO SEE THE PART WHERE WE DO THE CEREMONY.
NINA WANTED
OH.
I KNOW!

I'LL ASK MY DAD TO TAKE LOTS OF VIDEO...
...OF YOU TOO, NINA.

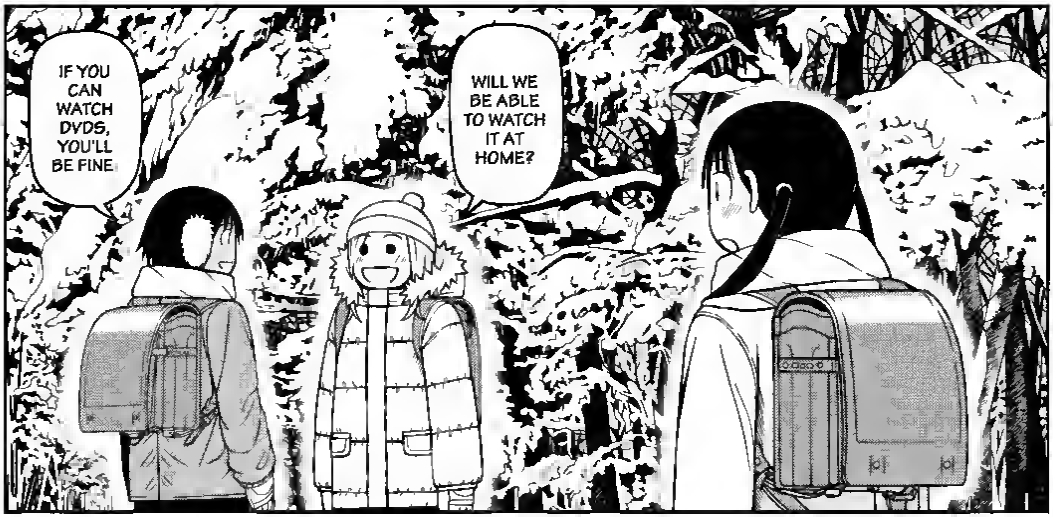
...SO YOU CAN WATCH THEM TOGETHER WITH SHUTARO-SAN.

AND THEN WE'LL COMBINE ALL OF THE PARTS YOU'RE IN..

BUT MY DAD SORT OF SUCKS AT FILMING VIDEOS..
SO IT THE QUALITY MIGHT NOT BE GREAT.
BUT IF YOU LOOK PAST THAT..


THANK YOU, ARISA-CHAN!

UM...


IF YOU CAN WATCH DVDS, YOU'LL BE FINE.
WILL WE BE ABLE TO WATCH IT AT HOME?

OH,
I KNOW!

UM
UH

NINA HAS TO THANK YOUR DAD
アリサちゃんのお父さんにお礼いわなくちゃ

HUH?
LET'S GO EAT AT THE FOOD STANDS.
ONCE THE LIGHTING CEREMONY ENDS

WHAT?
CURRY?
AND CURRY RICE STANDS.
YEP, THERE WILL BE HOTDOG, ODEN,
THERE WILL BE FOOD STANDS?

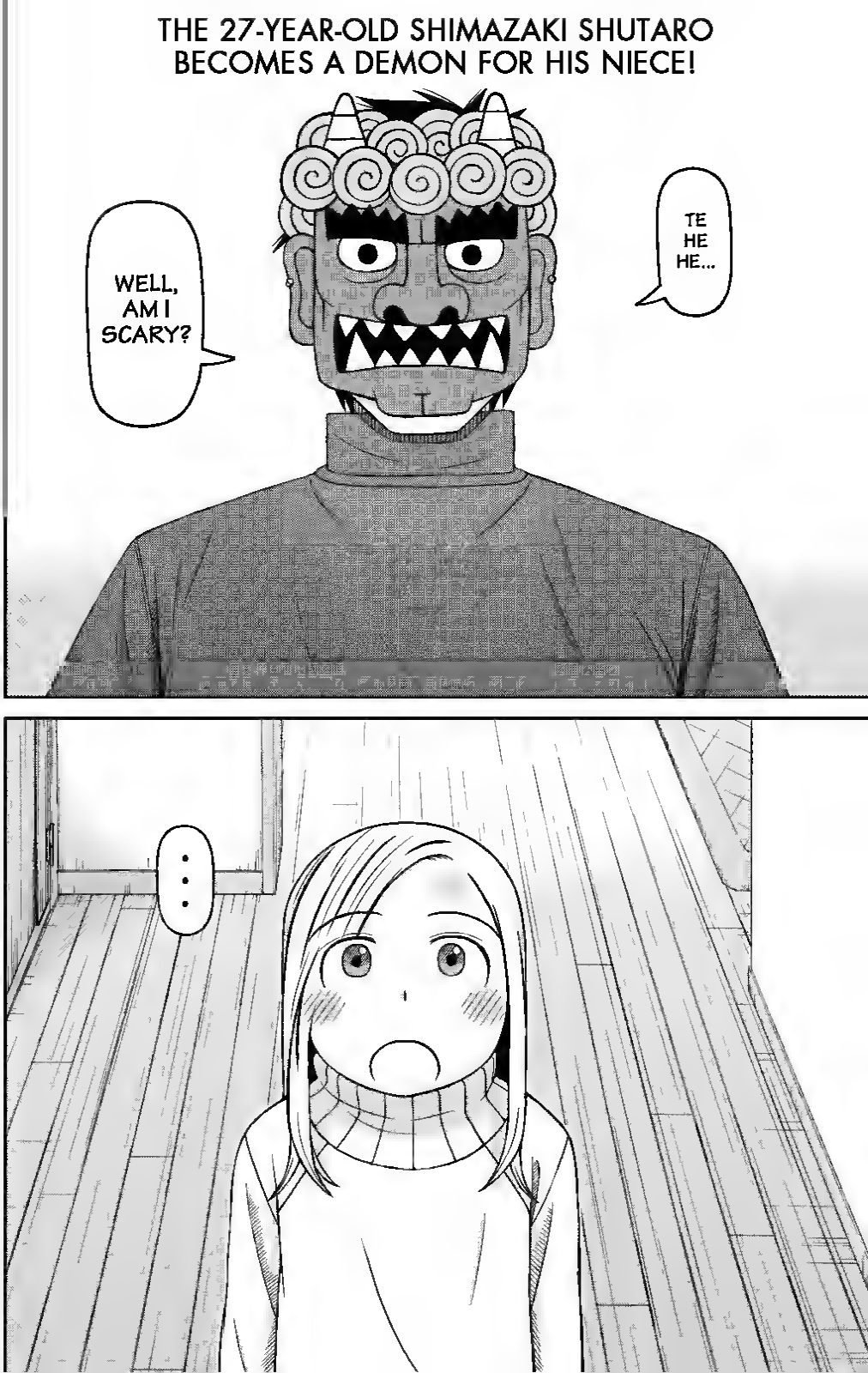
IT'S A FESTIVAL, IT'S NO BIG DEAL
PLUS I'M OFF DUTY
WELL, THAT'S CONVE-NIENT

KIDS SHOULD GO TO THE FOOD STANDS BY THEM-SELVES?
HOLD ON, YOU'RE THE CLASS PRESIDENT, AND YOU'RE SUGGESTING THAT

PLEASE LOOK FORWARD TO THE FESTIVAL CHAPTER!

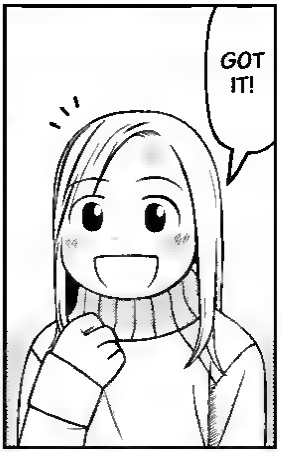
CHAPTER 59

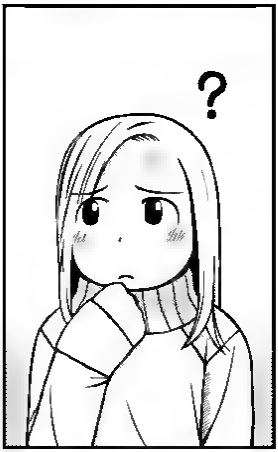
ENJOYING FEBRUARY 3RD


THE 27-YEAR-OLD SHIMAZAKI SHUTARO BECOMES A DEMON FOR HIS NIECE!
WELL, AM I SCARY?
TE HE HE...
...

THIS IS AN ONI.
SHUTARO,
WHAT'S THAT?

IT'S A DRUNK OLD MAN.
かお赤いし
YOUR FACE IS ALL RED.
WRONG

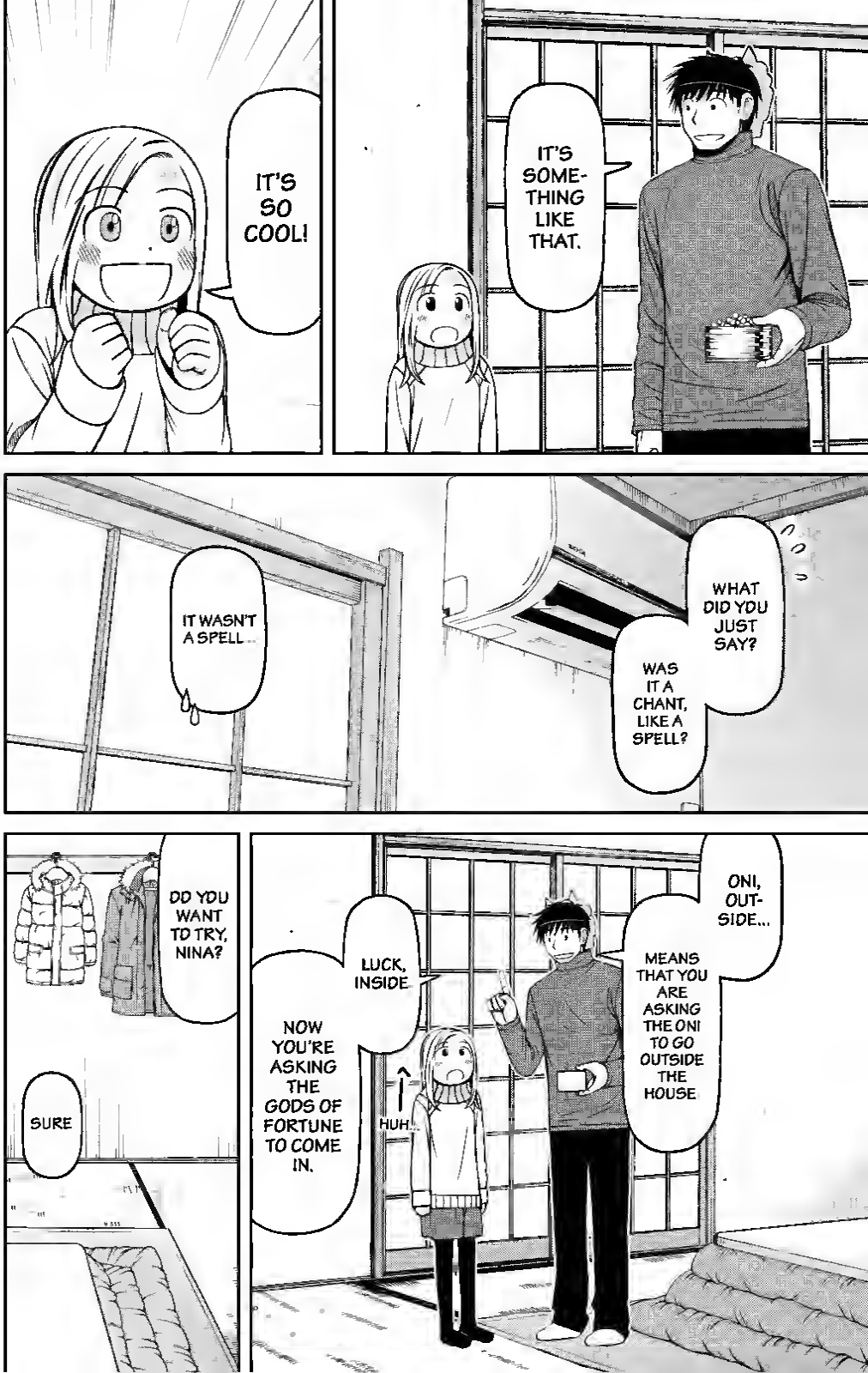

GOT IT!


?

SETSU-BUN?
TODAY IS SETSU-BUN

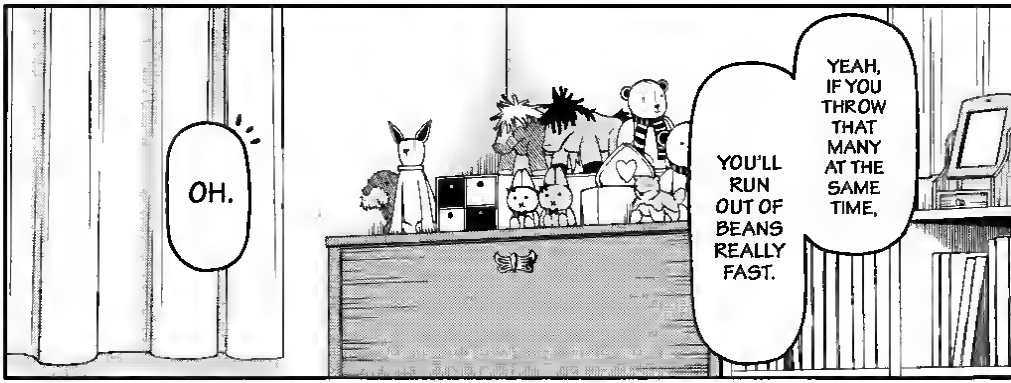
HUH...
THESE ARE THE BEANS THAT YOU USE ON SETSUBUN.
YOU SCATTER THE BEANS AROUND THE HOUSE AND DRIVE THE ONI AWAY.
WHY DO WE DRIVE THE ONI AWAY?
SO NINA HITS THE ONI WITH THIS?
UH...
ONI ARE SAID TO BRING ILLNESS, INJURIES
AND OTHER BAD THINGS
BAD THINGS?
ワルイもの？
WELL, NOT QUITE.

GRAB
ぎゅっ
ALL RIGHT, I'M GONNA GIVE IT A TRY, SO WATCH CLOSELY
OKAY
ONI...
...OUT-SIDE.
LUCK...
...INSIDE.
RATTLE
パラ

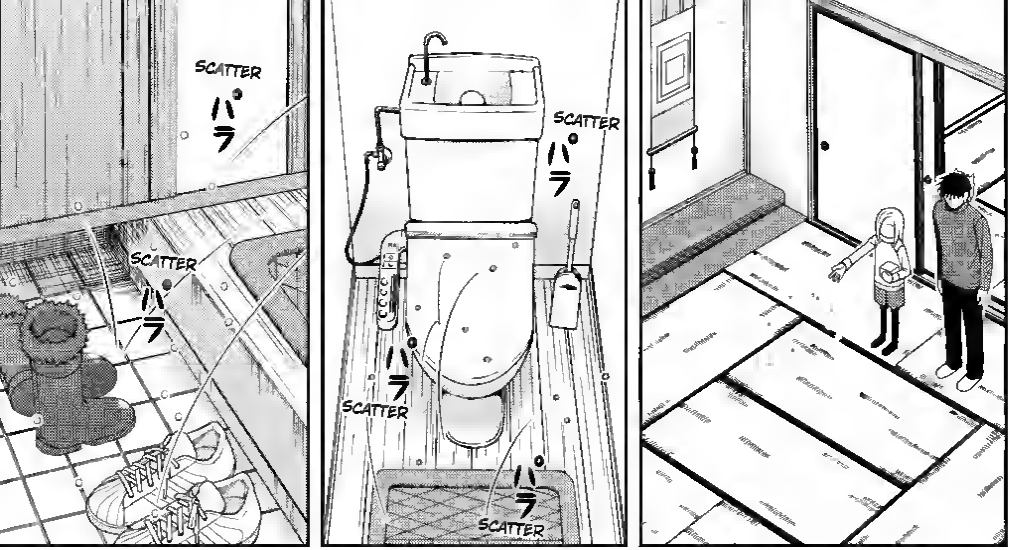

IT'S SO COOL!
IT'S SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
IT WASN'T A SPELL...
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?
WAS IT A CHANT, LIKE A SPELL?
DO YOU WANT TO TRY, NINA?
SURE
ONI, OUT-SIDE...
MEANS THAT YOU ARE ASKING THE ONI TO GO OUTSIDE THE HOUSE
LUCK, INSIDE
NOW YOU'RE ASKING THE GODS OF FORTUNE TO COME IN.
HUH...

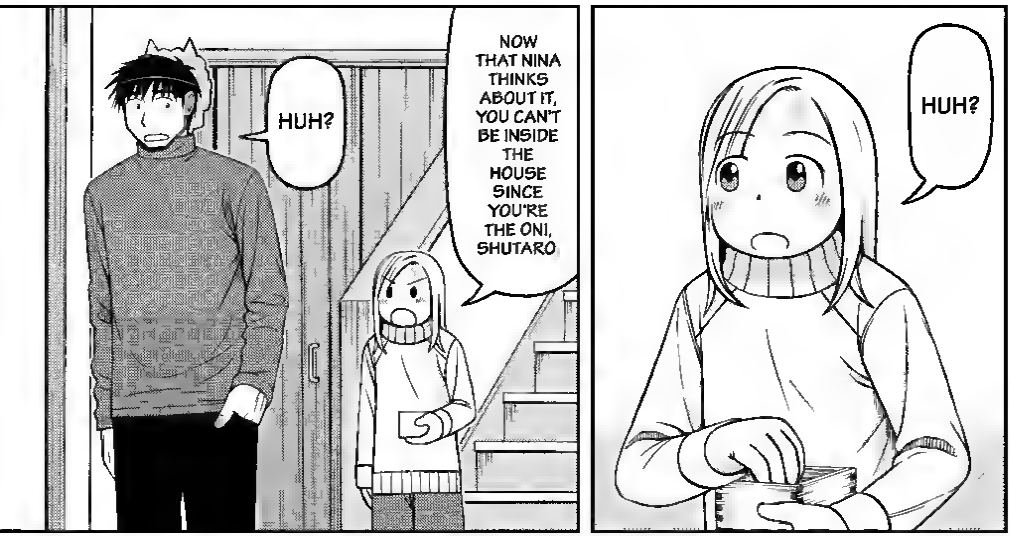
GRAB
NINA
FWOOSH
...OUT-SIDE!
ONI...
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
AAAH!

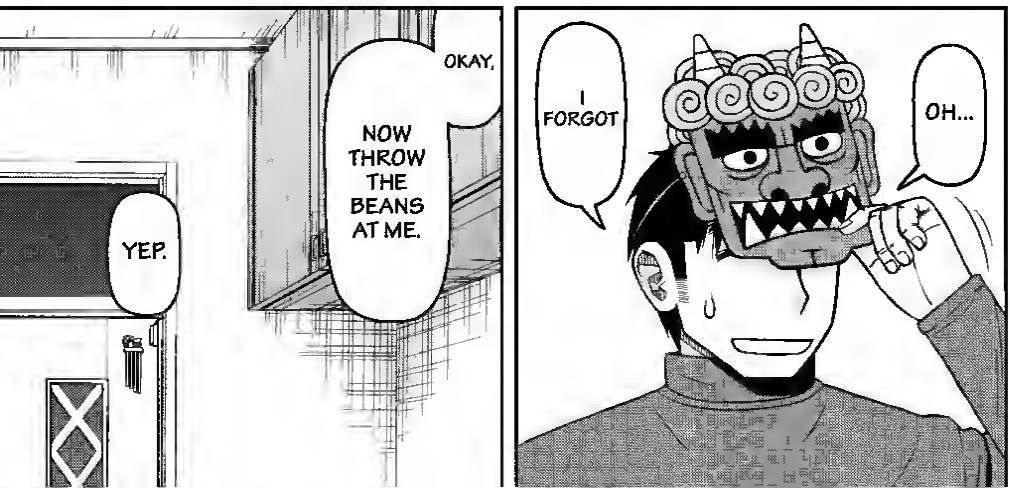
NANAE MOMOMOTO
LOVE VICTORY
at GOTTSUGOI ARENA
LIVE DVD NOW ON SALE
YOU DON'T HAVE TO THROW THAT MANY BEANS AT ONCE
REALLY?


YEAH, IF YOU THROW THAT MANY AT THE SAME TIME,
YOU'LL RUN OUT OF BEANS REALLY FAST.
OH.

I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH FOR YOUR ROOM
LET'S GO DO THE OTHER ROOMS
OKAY.

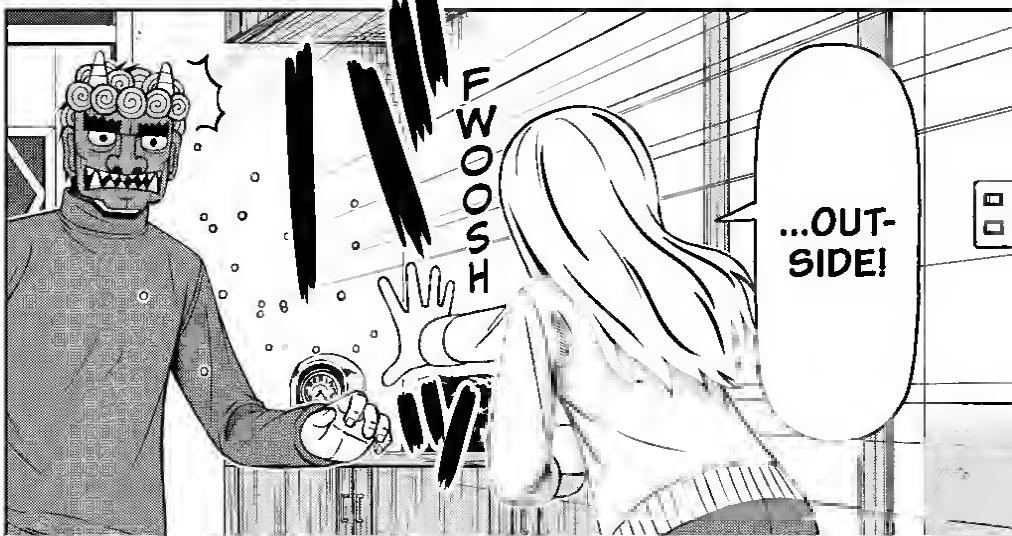

SCATTER
SCATTER
SCATTER
SCATTER
SCATTER


HUH?
NOW THAT NINA THINKS ABOUT IT, YOU CAN'T BE INSIDE THE HOUSE SINCE YOU'RE THE ONI, SHUTARO
HUH?

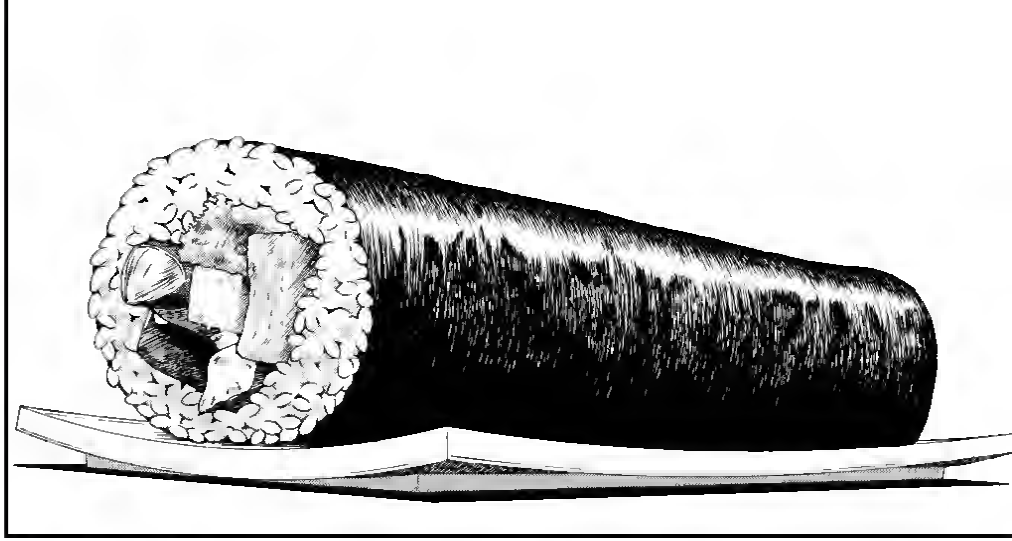

OKAY, NOW THROW THE BEANS AT ME.
YEP.
I FORGOT
OH...

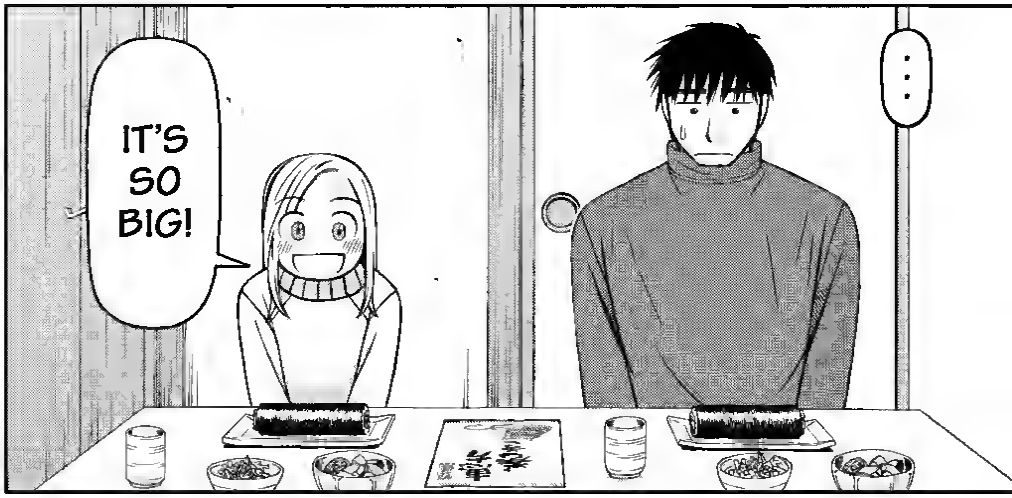
HERE NINA GOES, SHUTARO!
BRING IT.

ONI...


FWOOSH
...OUT-SIDE!

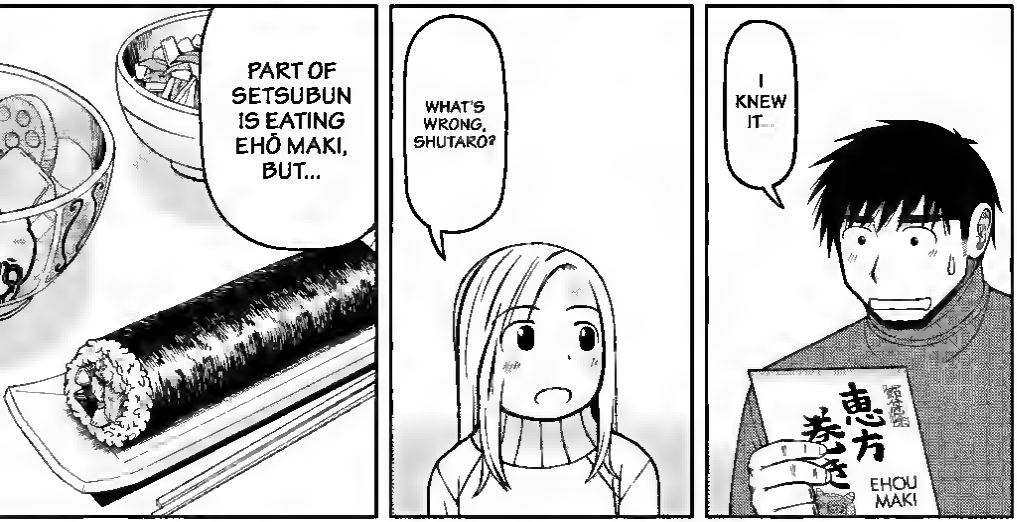
HEY,
TAKE IT EASY.
AHAHA.
OW!
OW!




IT'S SO BIG!
...

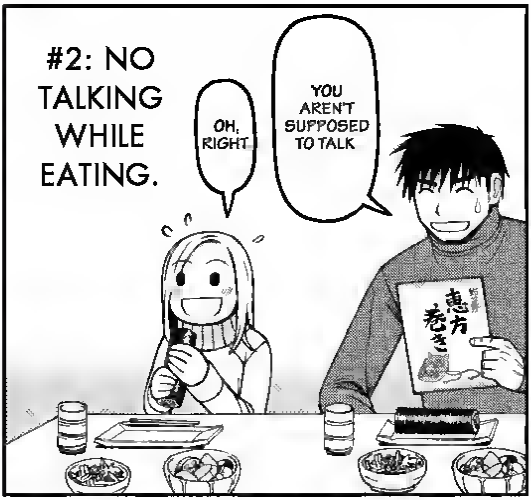
I JUST GOT THEM AT THE SUPER-MARKET
WHERE ARE THEY FROM, MOM?

THIS, HUH?
HOW TO EAT EHOU MAKI
IT WAS INCLUDED
買った時についてたの
WHICH SIDE TO EAT FIRST
THE PAPER IT CAME WITH TELLS YOU

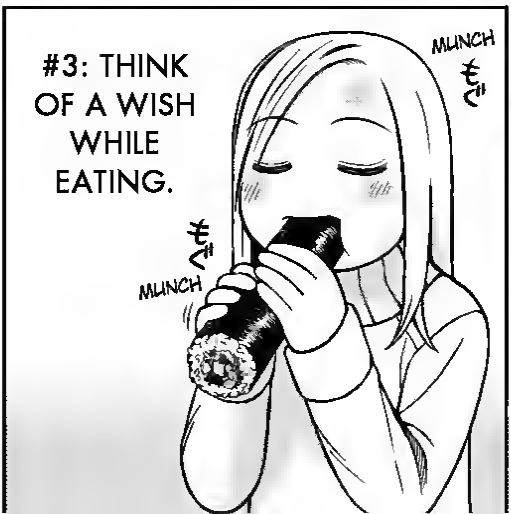

PART OF SETSUBUN IS EATING EHŌ MAKI, BUT...
WHAT'S WRONG, SHUTARŌ?
I KNEW IT...
恵方巻
EHOU MAKI

?
...THERE ARE A LOT OF RULES ABOUT HOW TO EAT IT, SO IT CAN BE ANNOYING.

EATING EHO MAKI (#1): FACE THE EHO (THE DIRECTION OF THE GODS) FOR THAT YEAR.
THIS YEAR IS THIS WAY
恵方巻き

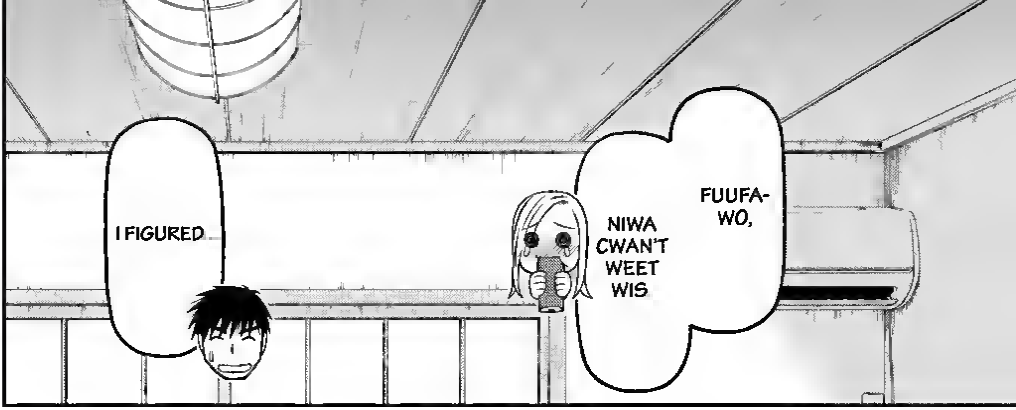

#2: NO TALKING WHILE EATING.
OH, RIGHT
YOU AREN'T SUPPOSED TO TALK
恵方巻き

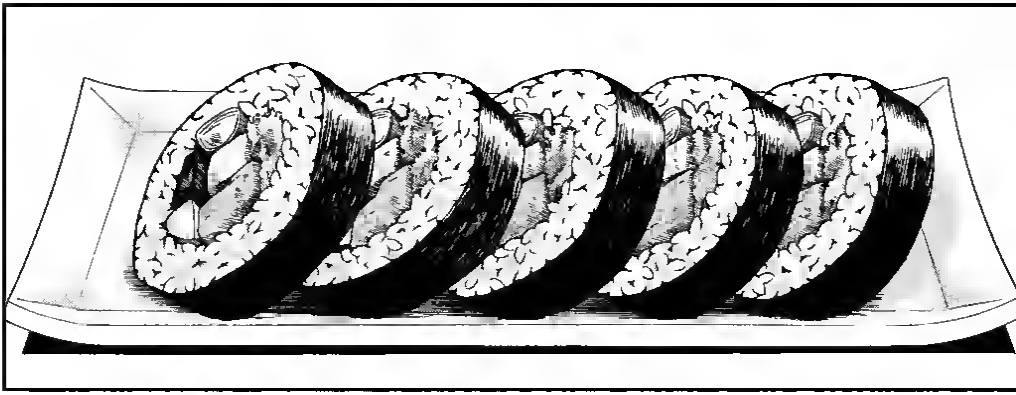
THANKS FOR THE FOOD.

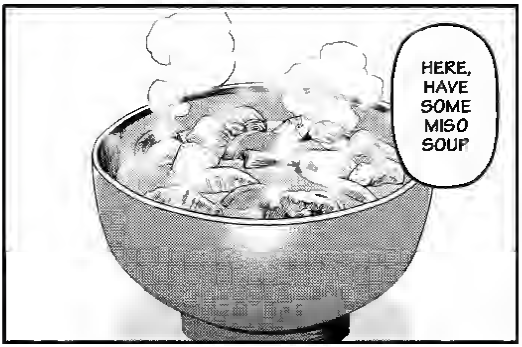

#3: THINK OF A WISH WHILE EATING.
MUNCH
もぐ
もぐ
MUNCH

CHOMP
ぱくっ

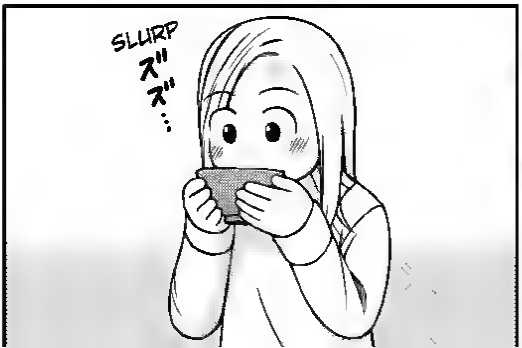
MUNCH
もぐ
MUNCH
もぐ
#4: YOU MUST EAT THE WHOLE THING.
MUNCH
もぐ
もぐ
MUNCH
...
#5: YOU MUST EAT IT ALL IN ONE SITTING.
MUNCH
もぐ
もぐ
MUNCH
...

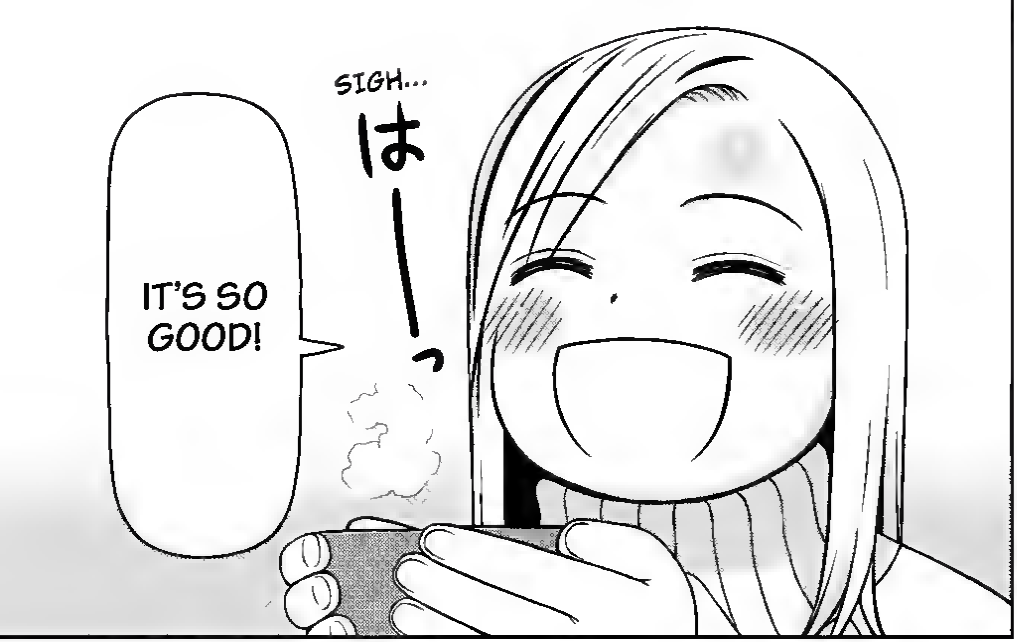

FUUFA-
WO,
NIWA
CWAN'T
WEET
WIS
I FIGURED

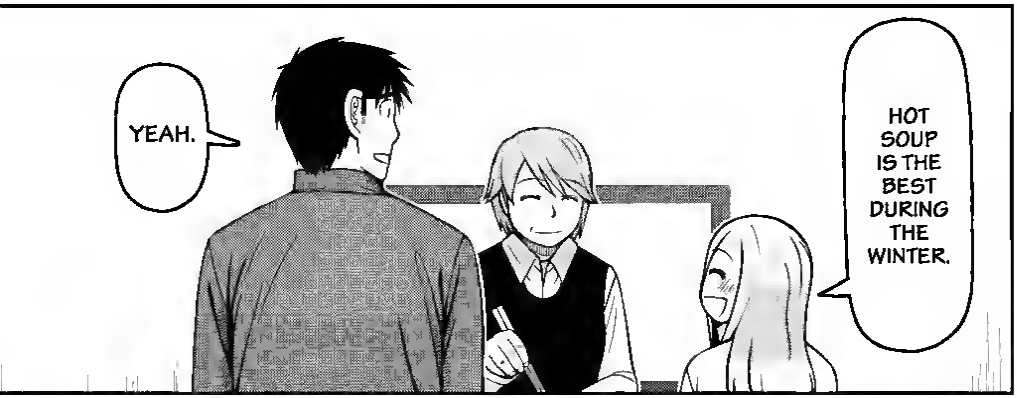



HERE,
HAVE
SOME
MISO
SOUP

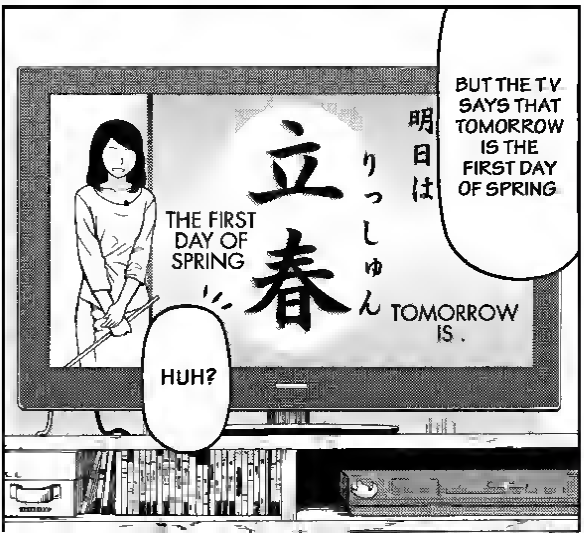
THIS IS
EASIER
TO EAT
WELL,
YEAH

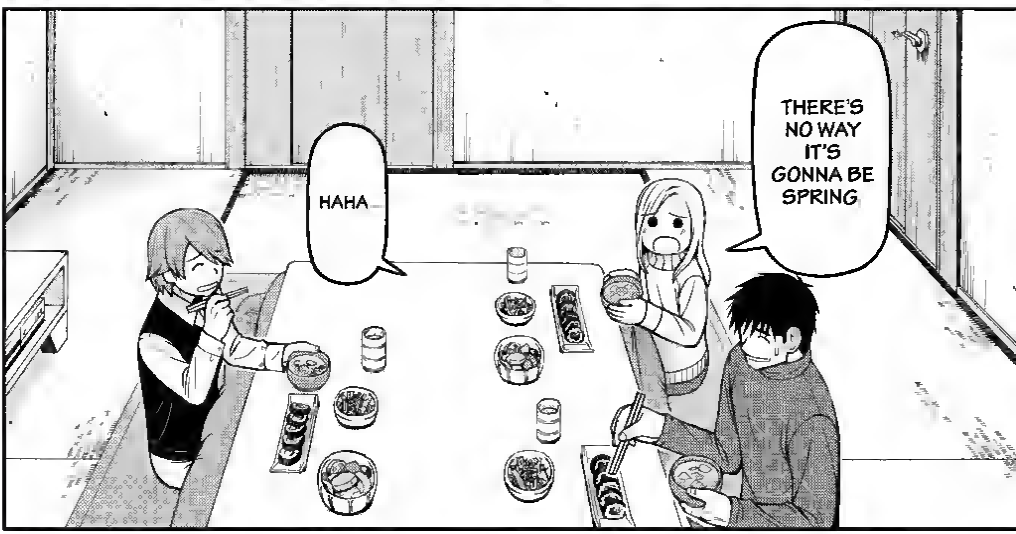

SLURP
ズズ…


SIGH...
はーっ
IT'S SO GOOD!


YEAH.
HOT SOUP IS THE BEST DURING THE WINTER.

SPRING...


BUT THE TV SAYS THAT TOMORROW IS THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING
明日は
立春
りっしゅん
THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING
TOMORROW IS .
HUH?



SPRING STILL SEEMS PRETTY FAR OFF.

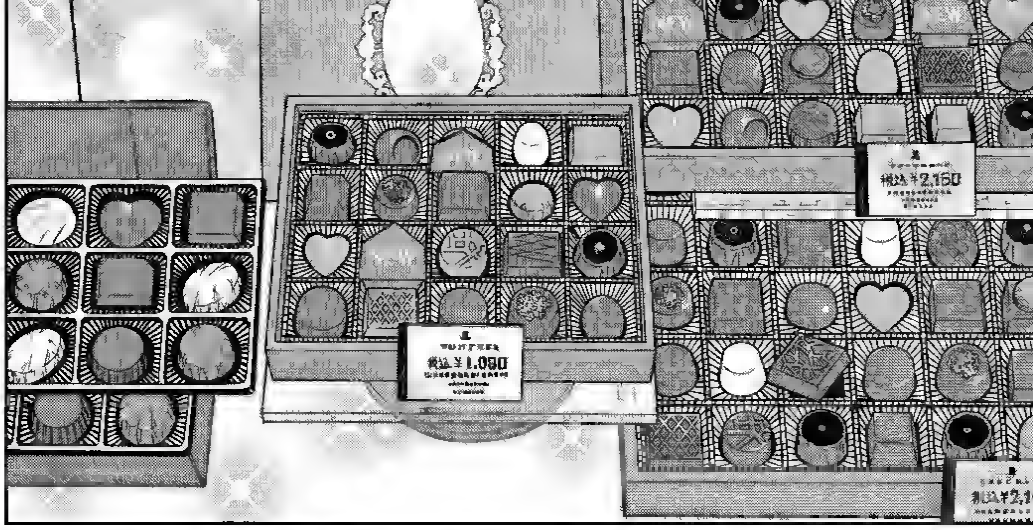
LET'S CONTINUE TO ENJOY WINTER!

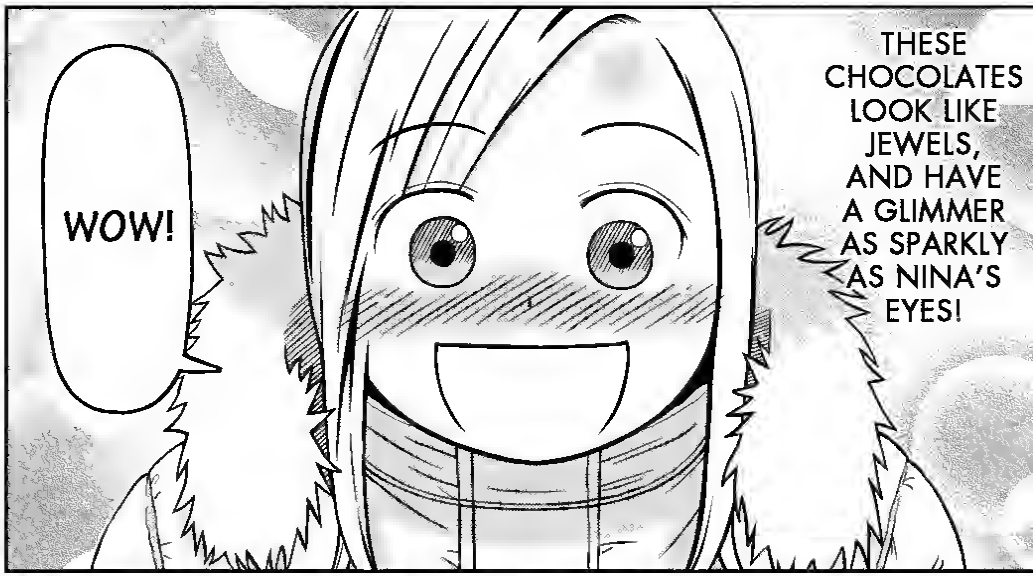
CHAPTER 60

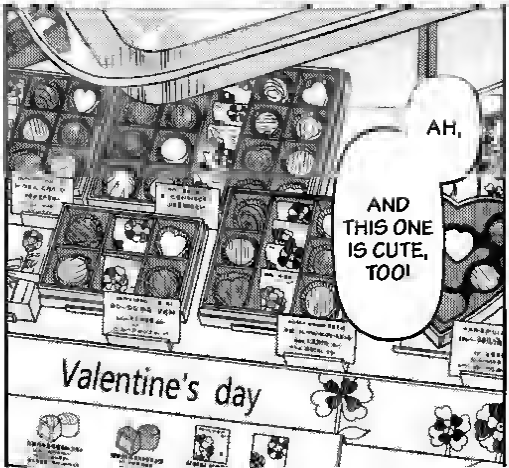
THIS IS MY FIRST

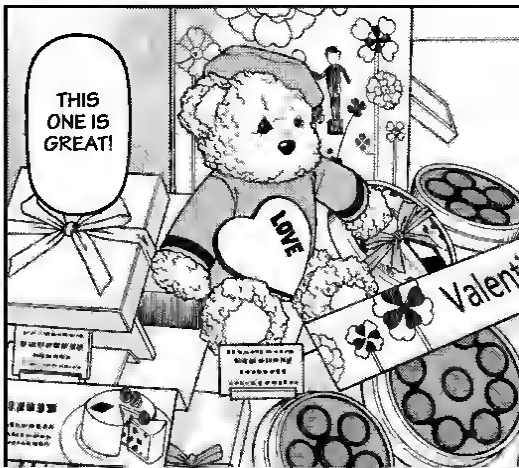
NINA'S GIFT TO YOU...

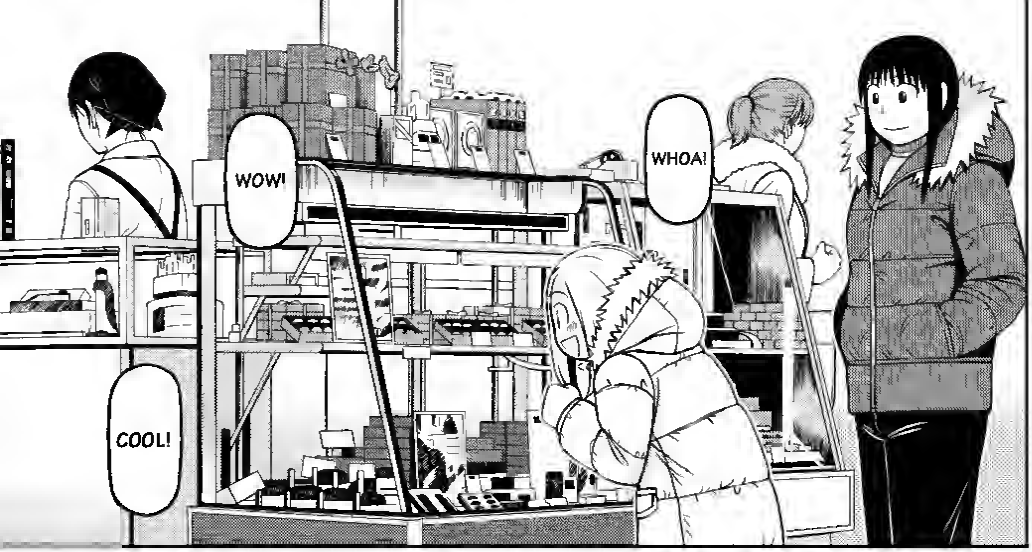
...IS FILLED WITH A YEAR'S WORTH OF LOVE.

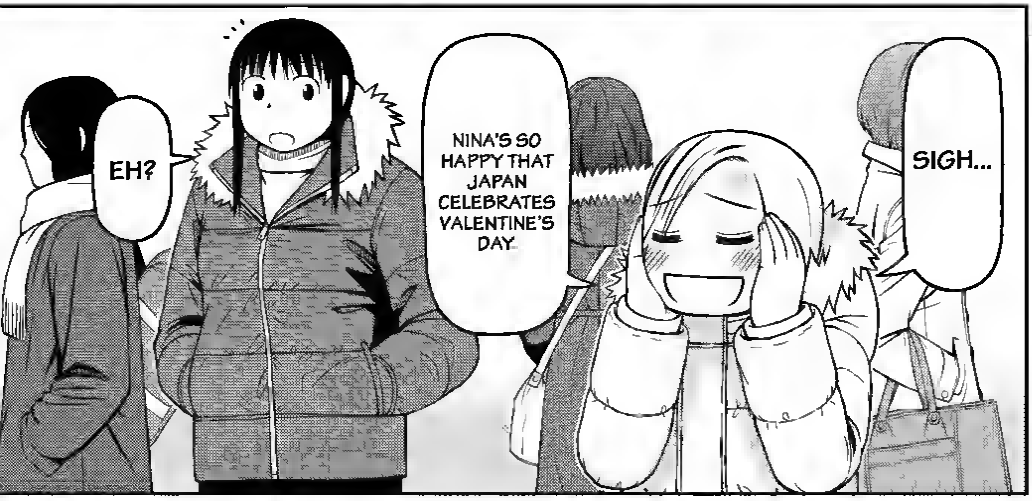


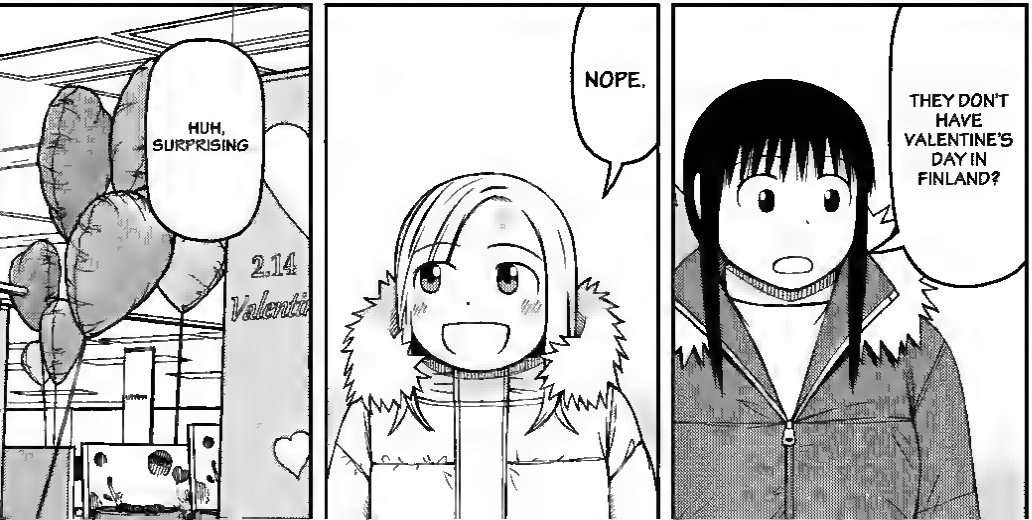

THESE CHOCOLATES LOOK LIKE JEWELS, AND HAVE A GLIMMER AS SPARKLY AS NINA'S EYES!
WOW!

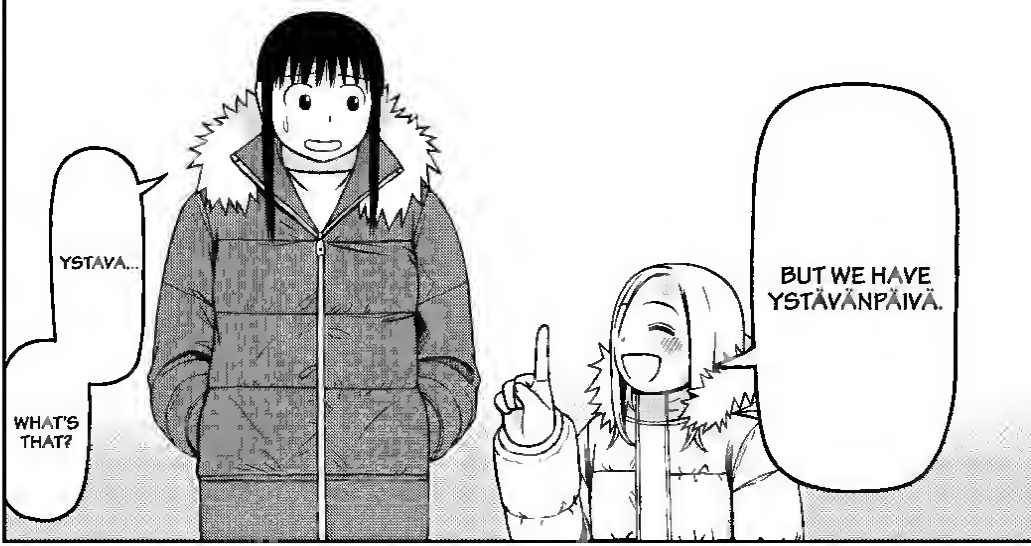

AH, AND THIS ONE IS CUTE, TOO!
Valentine's day

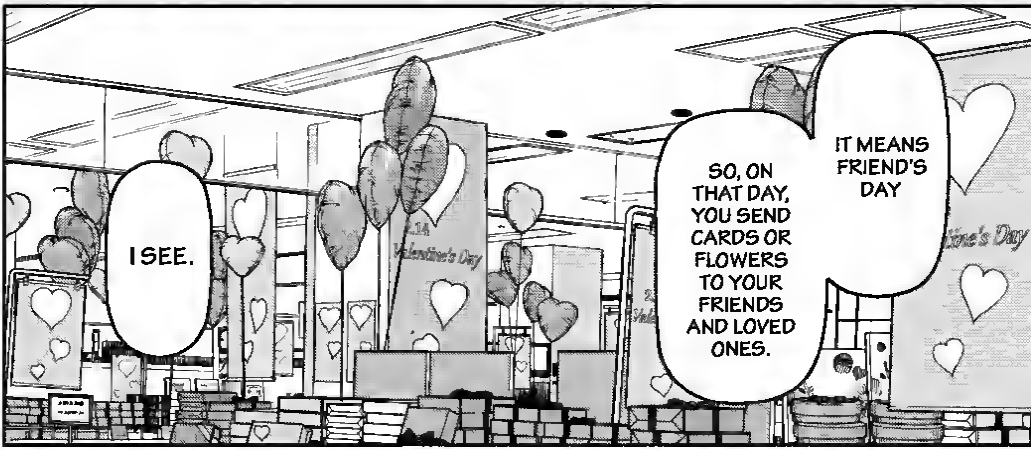

THIS ONE IS GREAT!
LOVE


WOW!
WHOA!
COOL!


EH?
NINA'S SO HAPPY THAT JAPAN CELEBRATES VALENTINE'S DAY.
SIGH...


HUH, SURPRISING
2.14
NOPE.
THEY DON'T HAVE VALENTINE'S DAY IN FINLAND?

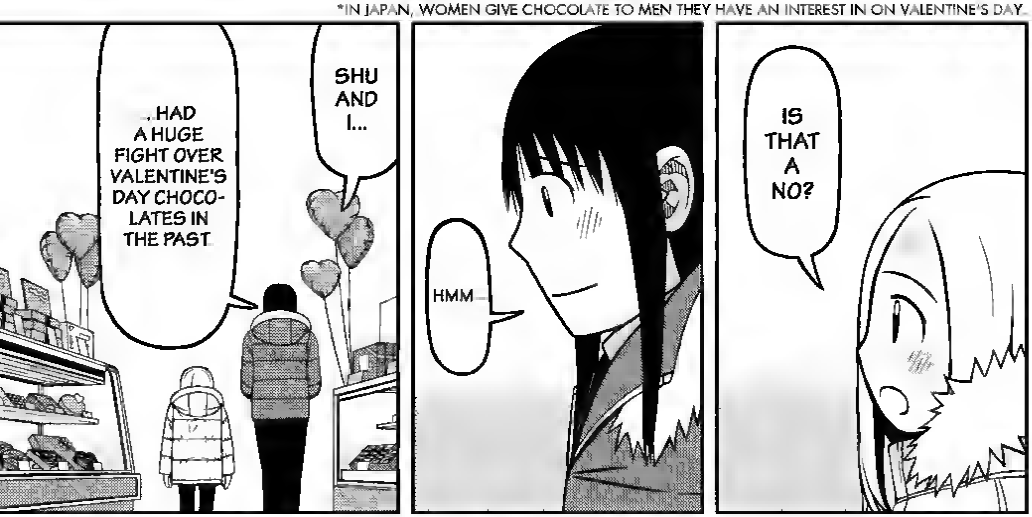

BUT WE HAVE YSTÄVÄNPÄIVÄ.
YSTAVA...
WHAT'S THAT?


IT MEANS FRIEND'S DAY
SO, ON THAT DAY, YOU SEND CARDS OR FLOWERS TO YOUR FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES.
I SEE.
Valentine's Day

IT'S ALL JUST SO LOVEY-DOVEY...
TRUE, IN JAPAN, IT FEELS MORE LIKE A HOLIDAY FOR GIRLS IN LOVE.

BUT NINA LIKES VALENTINE'S DAY IN JAPAN BETTER.

*IN JAPAN, WOMEN GIVE CHOCOLATE TO MEN THEY HAVE AN INTEREST IN ON VALENTINE'S DAY.

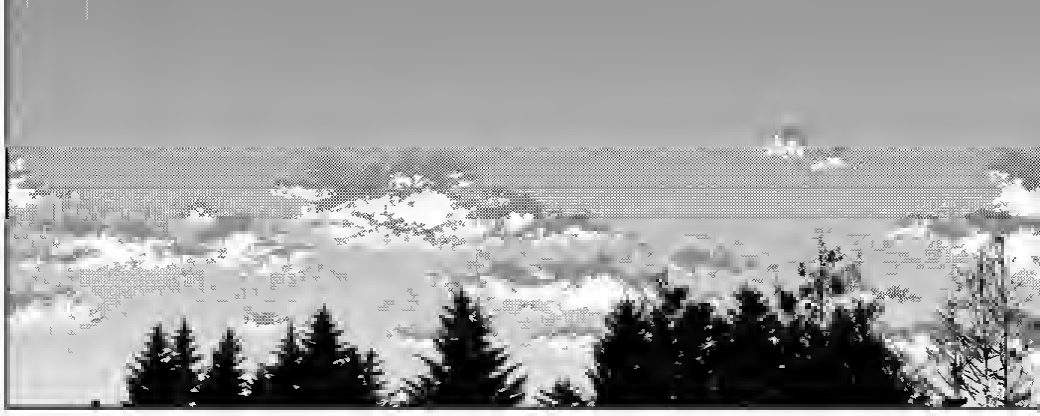


IWANAGA-SENPAI'S HEADING THIS WAY.
CALM DOWN, ME.
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
I DECIDED THAT I'D CONFESS MY LOVE FOR HIM TODAY, ON VALENTINE'S DAY!
PLEASE TAKE THESE!
U–
UM...
WHOOSH...
HE'S HERE!

SENPAI!
S-
SEN
SWOOP
THESE CHOCOLATES ARE GREAT!
MUNCH
MUNCH
HUH?
THANKS, TOMOE
I WAS JUST GETTING HUNGRY.

UGH, WHY ARE YOU EATING THOSE?
AND THAT'S WHAT HAP-PENED.
SO NOW, EVERY YEAR ON VALENTINE'S DAY...
I END UP WHINING TO SHU.
AND I'VE NEVER GIVEN HIM CHOCOLATES.
WELL, YOU SHOULD GET HIM SOME THIS YEAR
HM...
Valentine's Day

MAYBE I'LL GET SOME REALLY GOOD ONES FOR HIM.
THEN
NINA WILL BUY...
SOME-THING LIKE THIS FOR SHUTARO, TOO
EH?
THESE ARE KINDA EXPENSIVE, YOU SURE?
NINA BROUGHT ALL OF HER NEW YEAR'S MONEY, SO IT'S FINE
AND, IF THERE ARE A LOT IN THE BOX, NINA CAN PROBABLY HAVE SOME LATER, TOO.
HEH YOU'VE GOT IT ALL FIGURED OUT, NINA-CHAN.
Valentine's Day
Valentine's Day



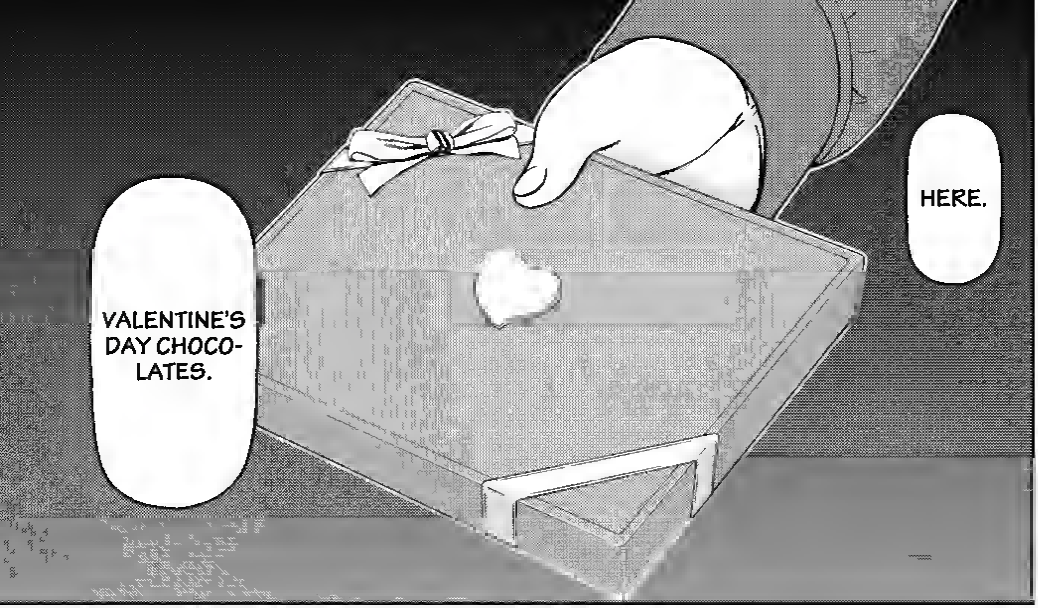
IT'S COLD
UGH

GOOD JOB AT WORK TODAY.
TOMOE
SHU.
DID YOU JUST FINISH WORK, TOO?
NO.
I WAS JUST OUT SHOPPING WITH NINA-CHAN
I SEE.
...
IT'S COLD AGAIN TODAY..
YEAH...

WE PROBABLY SHOULDN'T STAY OUT HERE.
LET'S GO INSIDE.
OH...
IT'S OKAY, REALLY.

I–
IT WON'T TAKE LONG.
IT?

YOU KNOW
TODAY IS VALENTINE'S DAY.
OH...
RIGHT
I SEE...


HERE.
VALENTINE'S DAY CHOCOLATES.

COME TO THINK OF IT, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE GIVEN YOU CHOCOLATES
YEAH

I CAN'T COUNT THE ONES FROM JUNIOR HIGH.
OF COURSE NOT, THOSE DON'T COUNT.

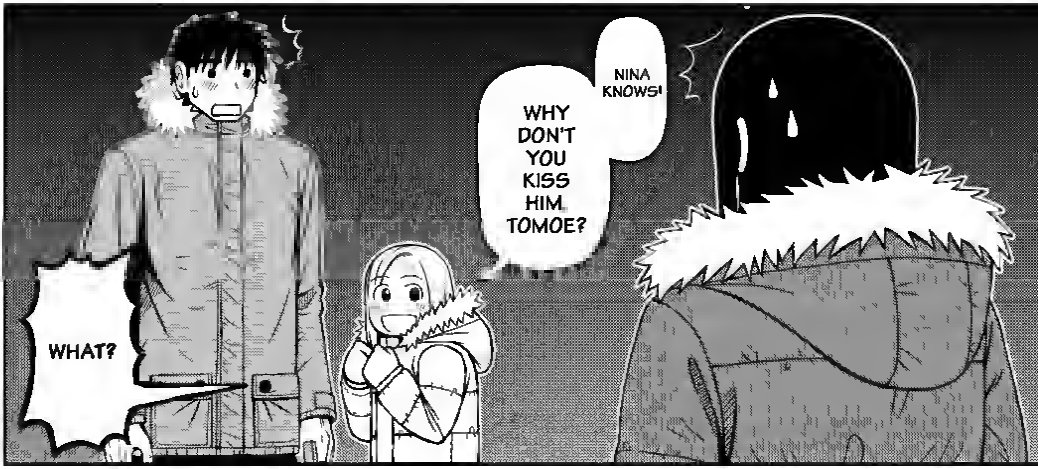
THANKS, TOMOE.

...
YEAH
I'LL BE SURE TO EAT THEM MORE THOUGHT-FULLY THIS TIME
...

JEEZ...
JUMP
YOU TWO JUST KEEP FIDDLING AWKWARDLY.
JUMP
NINA TOTALLY THOUGHT YOU'D BE MORE LOVEY-DOVEY.
OF COURSE NOT.
NINA-CHAN, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN STANDING THERE?
FROM THE BEGINNING.

HERE.
HAVE NINA'S CHOCO-LATES, TOO.
WHISPER
PSST
EH?
OF COUR-SE
WHISPER
CAN NINA GIVE HER GIFT TO HIM, TOO?
PSST
HEY
CROUCH DOWN FOR A SEC
HUH?
ARE YOU SURE THESE EXPENSIVE ONES WERE OKAY?
THANKS, NINA
HUH, LIKE THIS?
YEP

SMOOCH
チュッ
SHUTARO,
THANKS FOR EVERY-THING
S-
SURE
...



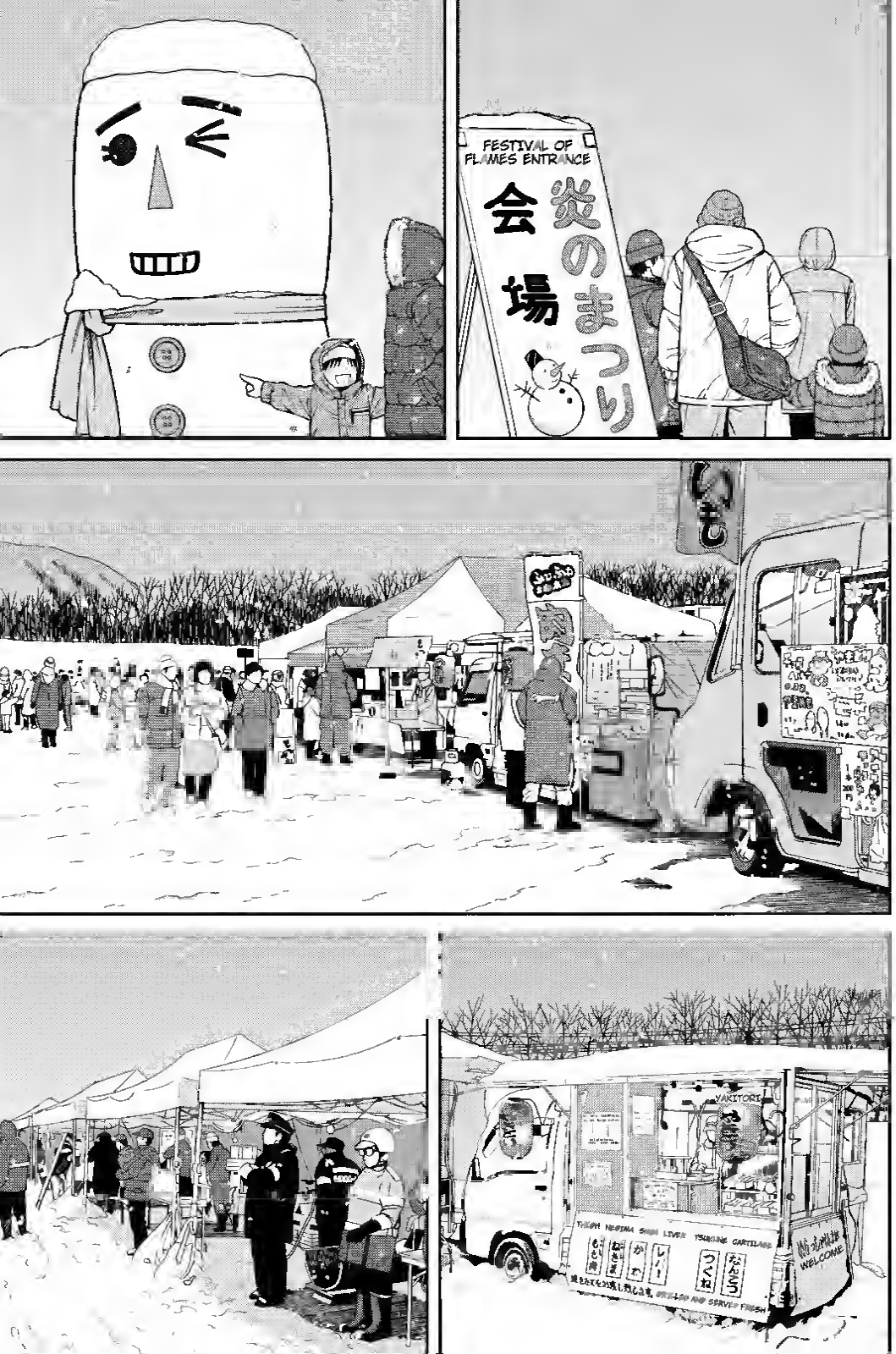
HOPEFULLY THEY'LL BE ABLE TO DO IT NEXT YEAR!

CHAPTER 61

FESTIVAL OF FLAMES (PART 1)

LET'S MAKE OUR TOWN'S EVENT THE BEST THAT WE CAN!

THE BIGGEST WINTER EVENT IN KITA-KARUIZAWA, THE FESTIVAL OF FLAMES, IS A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT.
HOT AND FLUFFY PORK BUNS


FESTIVAL OF
FLAMES ENTRANCE
炎のまつり
会場
YAKITORI
WELCOME

ACHOO!
ARE WE REALLY GOING TO DO THIS IN THIS COLD?
SENSEI
URGH
SO COLD...
WHAT?
OR JUST RELY ON PERSEVER-ANCE.
IF YOU'RE COLD, PUT ON MORE LAYERS.
AND USE MORE HAND WARMERS.
STOP WHINING.
NO FAIR, YOU'RE ALL BUNDLED UP, SENSEI.

Y-YOU THINK SO?
ARISA-CHAN, YOU LOOK SO CUTE!
TE HE HE
YOU LOOK REALLY GOOD, TOO, NINA.
NO...
I DON'T THINK THAT'S THE WORD FOR IT.
NINA SORT OF LOOKS LIKE A NINJA, HUH?

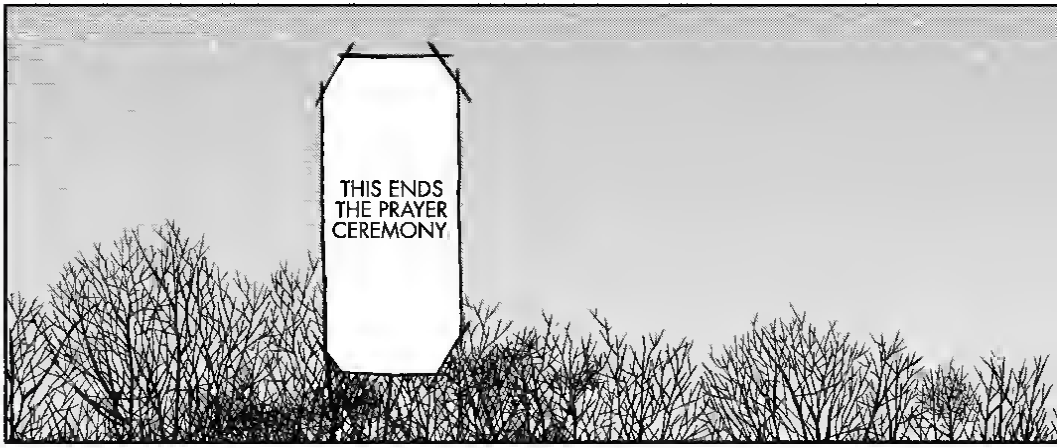
WHISPER
ヒソ
LOOK, YOU GUYS!
WHISPER
ヒソ
HEY.
WHISPER
ヒソ
WHISPER
ヒソ
HE'S BEEN POINTING HIS CAMERA AT US
FOR A WHILE NOW.
WHISPER
ヒソ
WHISPER
ヒソ
THAT GUY...
WHISPER
ヒソ
EH?
IS THAT ARISA-CHAN'S DAD?
HUH?
DAD?

HELLO.
I'M ARISA'S DAD.
HEY.
THIS IS MY DAD.
YUP.
SO YOU'RE NINA-CHAN.
AH.
LEAVE IT TO ME.
THANK YOU.
I'LL MAKE SURE I GET PLENTY OF FOOTAGE OF ALL OF YOU GUYS WITH MY CAMERA.
ARISA TALKS ABOUT YOU ALL THE TIME.
AND YOU, WITH THE PIGTAILS, YOU MUST BE MAKOTO-CHAN.
YES.

NO!
ARE YOU JEALOUS OR SOMETHING, ARISA?
HM?
DAD, THAT WAS SORT OF GROSS.
I'LL MAKE SURE YOU GUYS LOOK BEAUTIFUL.
R-RIGHT...
UH, REALLY?
YOUR DAD'S FUNNY, ARISA-CHAN!
I THINK MY DAD'S PRETTY NORMAL
IS YOUR DAD HERE TO SEE THE FESTIVAL, KOHINATA?
YEAH, HE JUST GOT HERE.
WHAT'S YOUR DAD LIKE, MAKOTO-CHAN?
HEY
EH?
MY DAD?

AND NINA, YOURS IS...
OH, SHUTARO-SAN CAN'T COME.
YEAH.
ANYONE ELSE?
GRANDMA AND TOMOE ARE HERE,
BUT THEY SEEM TO BE BUSY HELPING WITH THE FESTIVAL.
HUH..
WHO'S TOMOE?
...
IT'S OKAY, SHIMA-ZAKI-SAN.
I'M SURE YOUR GRAND-MOTHER WILL SEE YOU.
YEAH, YEAH!
I KNOW MY DAD'S A BIT WEIRD...
BUT I'M SURE HE'LL GET GOOD FOOTAGE LIKE HE SAID HE WOULD.

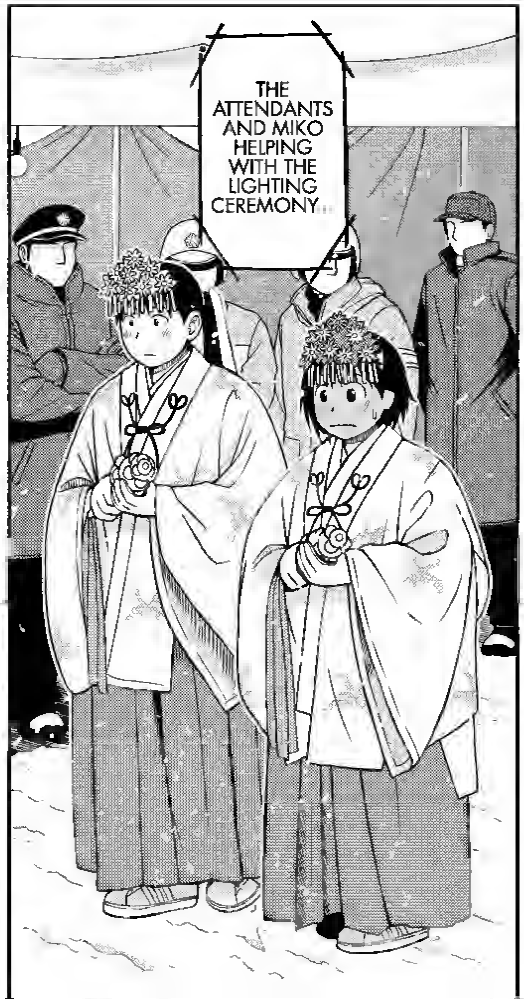
GUYS
GO DO YOUR BEST!
RIGHT
SECOND ELEMENTARY, YOUR TURN IS COMING UP!
YEAH

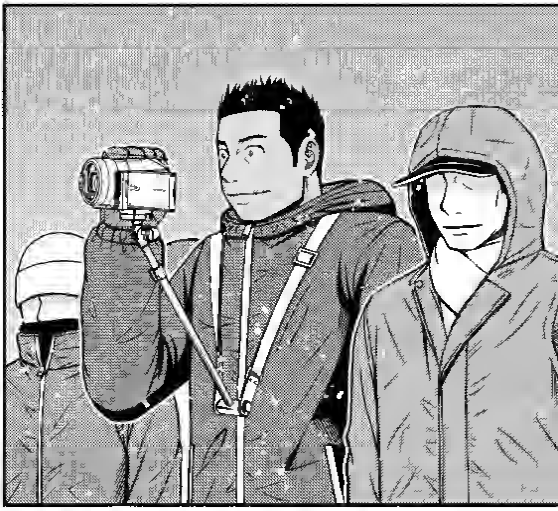

THIS ENDS THE PRAYER CEREMONY

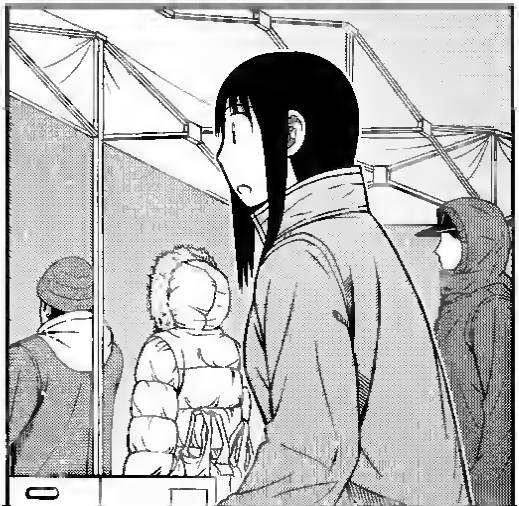
NEXT IS THE LIGHTING CEREMONY

SECURITY BOOTH
警備本部

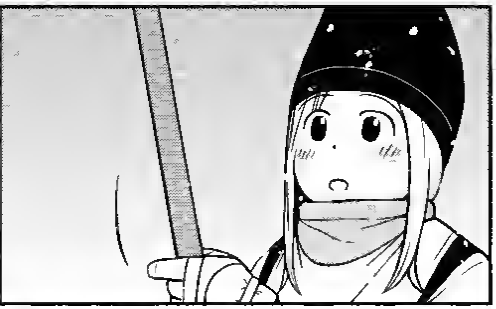
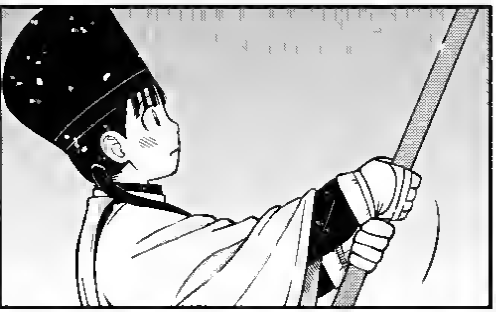
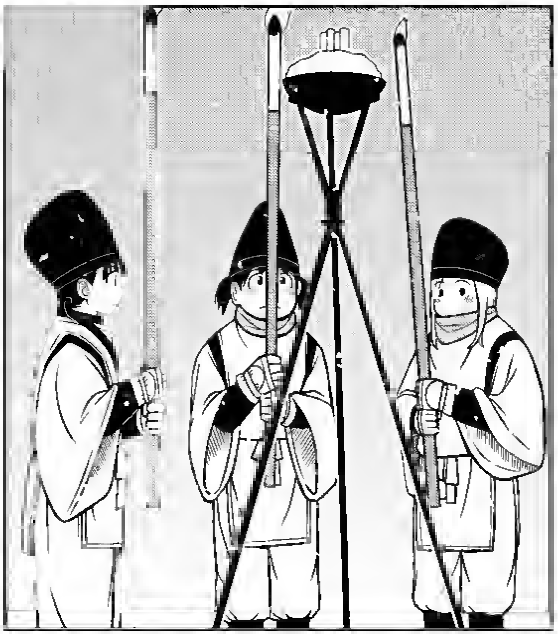
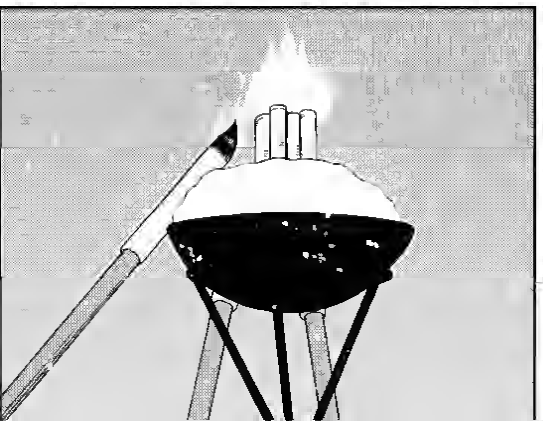
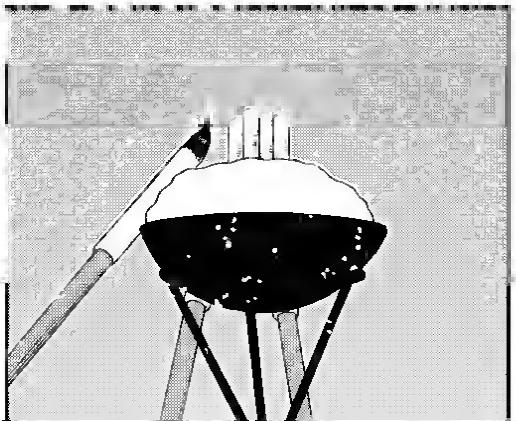
ARE 4TH AND 5TH GRADERS FROM KITA-KARUIZAWA SECOND ELEMENTARY


THE ATTENDANTS AND MIKO HELPING WITH THE LIGHTING CEREMONY



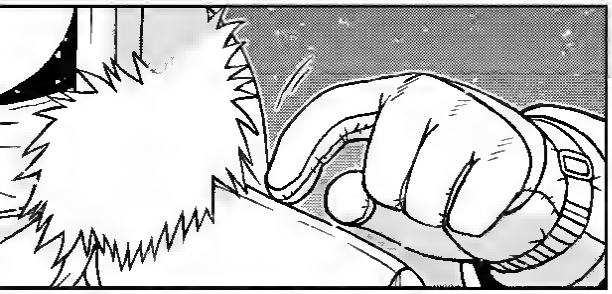


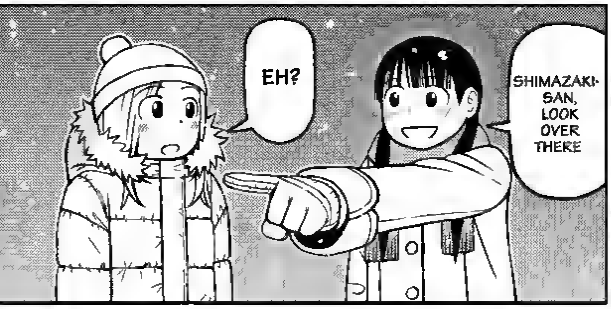
○ SPECIAL PRIZE
● FIRST PRIZE
● SECOND PRIZE
○ THIRD PRIZE
PRAYER CANDLES SOLD HERE
祈願ロウソク販売所
○特等賞

THIS ENDS THE LIGHTING CEREMONY.
IT LIT...
ついた…
はーい
OKAAY!
NOW, GO RELAX AND ENJOY THE FESTIVAL.
YOU GUYS DID WELL.
はーい
おわったー
WHEW, IT'S OVER.

もつ煮




EH?
SHIMAZAKI-SAN, LOOK OVER THERE

THERE ARE SO MANY FOOD STALLS!
IT'S TRUE!

4000 CANDLES HAVE BEEN LIT ON THE SNOWY PLAINS.
SO PRETTY!

PLEASE ENJOY THIS BEAUTIFUL VIEW OF SNOW AND FLAMES
IT'S SO ROMANTIC.
YEAH...

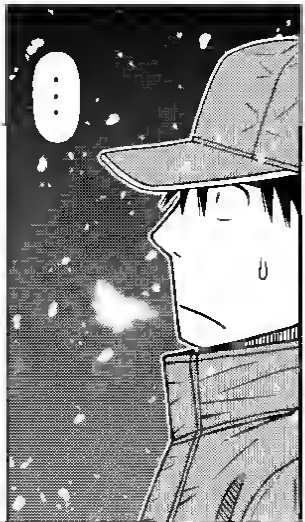
THE STORY CONTINUES IN THE NEXT CHAPTER!

CHAPTER 62 FESTIVAL OF FLAMES (PART 2)

WILL THE FLOWERS THAT BLOOM IN THE WINTER NIGHT SKY FILL HER EMPTINESS?

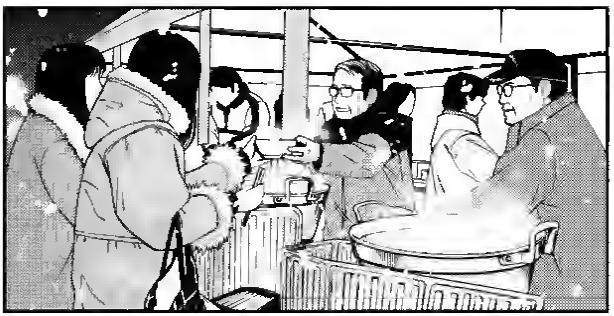
GS
WHILE NINA AND THE OTHERS WERE ENJOYING THE FESTIVAL, SHUTARO WAS WORKING HARD IN THE SNOW.

GS
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
GS
ICE GUARD
アイスガード


...

WHEW...

THIS...
...MIGHT MEAN THE FIREWORKS WILL GET CANCELLED



YAKISOBA
焼きそば

THE MOTSU STEW WAS SO GOOD.
SIGH...
SLURP
すー
YEP.
IT WARMS YOU RIGHT UP, DOESN'T IT?
IT LOOKS SO GOOD.
I'VE BOUGHT SOME YAKITORI AND TSUKUNE, SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING

もぐ
MUNCH
もぐ
MUNCH
もぐ
MUNCH
MAN, YOU REALLY EAT A LOT, NINA.
THAT'S BECAUSE THERE'RE A LOT OF FOOD STALLS
HOT AND FLUFFY PORK BUNS
肉まん
...AND NINA WANTS TO TRY ALL OF THEM
MOTSU STEW
もつ煮
WELL I GUESS YOU HAVE A POINT
OKONOMI-YAKI

YOU STILL WANT TO EAT MORE?
HUH?
WHAT SHOULD WE EAT NEXT?
WE HAVE AN AN-NOUNCE-MENT
OKAY, NINA WILL GET SOME AMAZAKE
LET'S GO OVER THERE
WELL, I GUESS AMAZAKE IS OKAY...
REGARDING THE FIRE-WORKS THAT WERE SCHEDULED FOR 6 30 P.M.....
PLEASE STANDBY
WE ARE CURRENTLY UNSURE WHETHER WE WILL BE ABLE TO LAUNCH THEM DUE TO THE SNOW

THIS SNOW MEANS
THEY MIGHT HAVE TO CANCEL THE FIRE-WORKS
WHAT?
ARISA!
DAD.
AH, THERE YOU ARE.
DID YOU GUYS GET LOTS OF FOOD FROM THE FOOD STALLS?
YEAH.
THEN...
LET'S GO FIND A PLACE WITH A GOOD VIEW OF THE FIRE-WORKS.
HUH?
BUT THEY JUST SAID THEY MIGHT BE CANCELLED.

NO PROBLEM!
THERE'LL BE FIRE-WORKS, NO MATTER WHAT!
ESPECIALLY WITH THIS LITTLE SNOW.
「このくらいの雪なら問題ないって」

I KNOW.
WHY DON'T YOU COME AND SEE THE FIREWORKS WITH US, NINA-CHAN AND MAKOTO-CHAN?
EH?

UM...
WOULD IT BE OKAY IF MY DAD CAME, TOO?
OF COURSE, I DON'T MIND.

NINA-CHAN, YOU SHOULD GO TELL YOUR FAMILY THAT
YOU'RE WITH ME SO THAT THEY DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOU.
OKAY

WE WILL PROCEED WITH THE FIRE-WORKS AT 6:50PM.
THOUGH IT WILL BE 20 MINUTES LATER,
ATTENT-ION, PLEASE
YEAH
ISN'T THAT GREAT DAD?
SEE?
IT'S JUST LIKE YOU SAID DAD

ヒュルルルルル…
WHIZZ
ドーン!!
BOOM

POM
ポン
NINA...
SORRY I'M LATE
HUFF
PUFF
SHUTARO?
...

...
...SO I HURRIED OVER RIGHT AFTER WORK ENDED
I HEARD THE FIRE-WORKS WERE DELAYED BY 20 MINUTES
ぎゅっ
SQUEEZE
WHAT'S WRONG NINA?
HM?

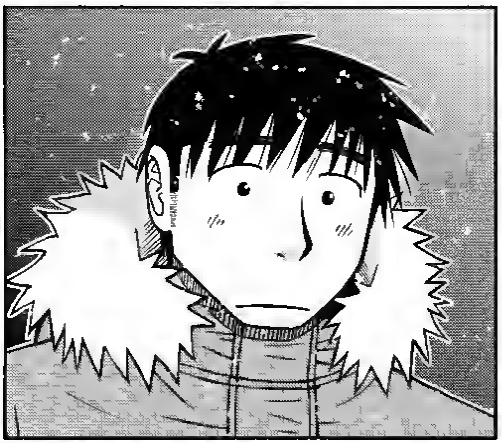
NOTHING
...
COME ON
LET'S WATCH THE FIREWORKS TOGETHER
YEAH...

HM?
HEY, SHUTARO?

NINA'S REALLY HAPPY...
...THAT YOU'RE HERE, SHUTARO.

THANKS.

YEAH.

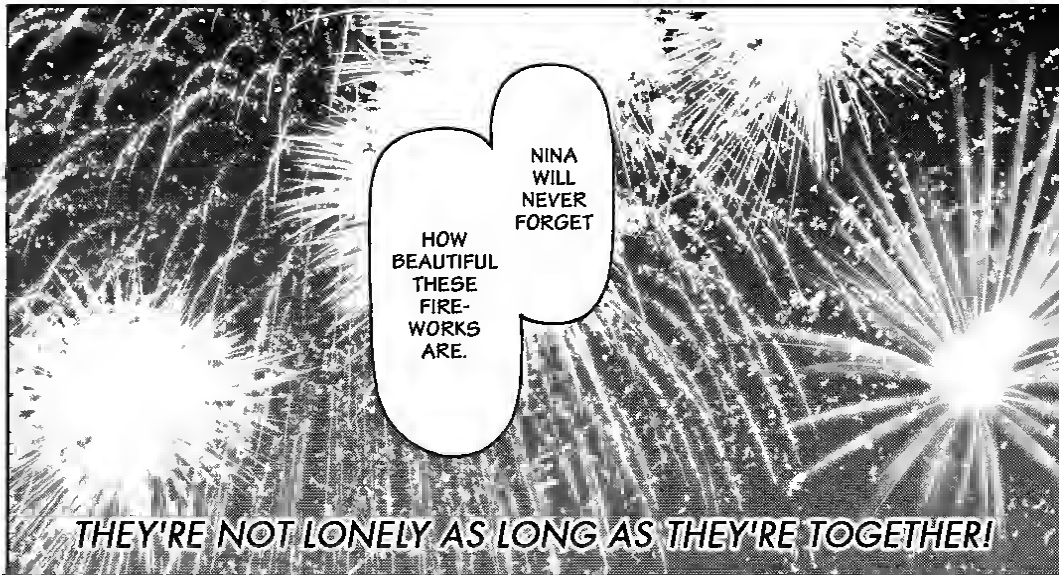


YEAH.
THE FIRE-WORKS ARE PRETTY, HUH?

REALLY?
...ARE MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN FIRE-WORKS IN THE SUMMER.
AH, RIGHT.
APPARENTLY FIREWORKS IN THE WINTER.

SO THIS IS BETTER.
NINA LIKES BEING ABLE TO SEE THE SNOW AND FIREWORKS TOGETHER.

BUT I GUESS IT DOESN'T MAKE MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE WITH THIS SHOW


NINA WILL NEVER FORGET HOW BEAUTIFUL THESE FIRE-WORKS ARE.
THEY'RE NOT LONELY AS LONG AS THEY'RE TOGETHER!